



**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF
SRI AUROBINDO AND Dr. IQBAL**

**WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THEIR CONCEPTS REGARDING
THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE**

**THESIS
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ABSTRACT

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The thesis is an attempt to present a comparative study of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Some writers, for instance, Professor P.T. Raju and Dr. S. Sinha, had pointed out the possibility of such a study. So we have taken up this study.

We have begun this work with the belief that 'isolationism' is not good for philosophical spirit which is wedded to free enquiry and accepts no barriers in the pursuit of truth. We further believe that as the ultimate Reality has got many aspects, each theory or point of view approaches it in its own peculiar way. So it is obvious that the synthesis and harmonising of different points of view would enable us to have a more and more comprehensive vision of the Reality. Besides, it is also a fact that the understanding and appreciation of one another's culture and philosophy bring different peoples closer to one another. Thus we believe that comparative studies in philosophy are likely to serve the above mentioned ends in an effective way.

Besides the 'Introduction', the thesis has been divided into five chapters. In the 'Introduction', we have tried to explain the problem and the possibilities of this study. We have shown here that due to misinterpretation, the people of the East came to associate the spirituality with asceticism and poverty of life. This attitude was largely a result of the doctrine of self-negation. Therefore, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal felt a great need of reinterpretation and reconstruction of their respective religious and philosophical traditions. They worked in this direction and presented their concept of the ultimate Ideal or goal of human life to be the self-ment which synthesises both the active participation in the affairs of World and spirituality.

The first chapter of the thesis deals with biographical facts and historical background of the life of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. We have included this chapter as we believe that the biographical facts help a great deal in understanding the thought of a philosopher. Here we have shown that both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal had opened their eyes in the subjugated India; both had drunk deep at the fountains of knowledge of both the East and West and that is why, whatever is the best in the East and the West, we find synthesised and transfigured in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Both the philosophers had seen the passivity and inaction in their country and in a way their whole philosophical contribution is a result of the challenge of their times.

The second chapter deals with the views of the two philosophers regarding the sources of knowledge. Both of them give due place to experience, reason and intuition. They synthesise the two apparently opposed sources of knowledge — Intellect and Intuition.

The thesis lays down particular emphasis on the two philosophers' concept of the Ideal of human life. In fact, the ultimate Ideal is a necessary corollary of one's metaphysical position. Hence the chapter on 'Metaphysical Foundations' precedes the 4th chapter, "The Ideal of Human Life." The philosophical position of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal may be termed as realistic monism. They regard the ultimate Reality as the Supreme Self and the universe, according to them, is real manifestation or unfoldment of that Reality; it is not an illusory show. They believe that Pantheism is only a half truth, the ultimate Reality being both immanent as well as transcendent. They regard the process of the manifestation as an evolution. According to them, as the evolving ultimate Reality is infinite, so is this process of evolution. Man is destined for infinite progress.

As we have just said, Chapter 4th deals with the two philosophers' concept of the Ideal of Human Life. According to them, the self-negation or self-extinction is not the ultimate destiny of man. The individuality of man is never abolished altogether. The true goal of our life is self-affirmation and self-realisation through realising God and His attributes in our own life. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal firmly believe that asceticism is a product of the period of decadence and that it does not represent the true oriental culture. The true spirituality combines with it both the active participation in the affairs of the world and the Love of God. So far the relationship of the individual and the society is concerned, they are against both the absolute individualism and the over-organised totalitarian society. They attach due importance to both the individual and the society. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are convinced that if we follow their ideal in our life, the divine life or the kingdom of heaven is possible here upon earth. This life would be marked by harmony, ~~justice~~ justice, light, bliss and immortality.

The 5th chapter 'The Conclusion' contains the concluding remarks and tries to assess as to how far we have succeeded in our efforts and how the by presumptions, with which we had started, have been justified/our study.

The originality of our humble work lies in the fact that though the direction was pointed out by certain writers towards this kind of study, nobody had taken up this problem in details, so far. The main contribution of our thesis lies in comparing the two great thinkers of modern India representing two great cultural and philosophical systems related to Hinduism and Islam. Our study has highlighted the basic similarities in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Academically speaking, the fact of similarities between them is quite significant. It brings to light the fact how two

philosophers, though deriving inspiration from two ~~xxxx~~ apparently different sources when placed in similar environments and faced by similar stimuli, react in a closely similar way. It also indicates the basic unity of human thought and helps minimize the gulf of prejudice and misunderstanding between different communities. Taking help from all the available material on Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, we have tried to present in our thesis their fundamental positions in a coherent and systematic ~~xxxx~~ way emphasising the main points of similities between them particularly regarding their concept of the Ideal of human life.

P R E F A C E

I would like to clear one possible misunderstanding regarding this thesis. It was not our aim to compare the personalities of the two philosophers, Sri Aurobindo Ghose and Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal. In fact, what these two glorious figures of India seek to do is the reinterpretation and reconstruction of their respective religious and philosophical traditions in the light of the growth of modern sciences. And it is in this connection that I have tried to bring out some fundamental similarities between their approaches.

I take this opportunity to express my deep sense of gratitude towards my Supervisor, Professor Z.A. Siddiqi, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, without whose kind help and able guidance this work would not have been completed. I also thank the authorities of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, who very kindly placed their Library at my disposal for consulting the relevant literature on Sri Aurobindo. I am also very much thankful to the learned Yogis and Professors of the Ashram who were kind enough to guide me on various points concerning the life and thought of Sri Aurobindo. My thanks are also due to the University Grants Commission who were gracious enough to award me Junior Research Fellowship to pursue this study.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

An important trend in the modern world is reflected in the desire for closer relations among different peoples and nations. This desire can be fulfilled in the best way through a sympathetic understanding and appreciation of one another's culture and philosophy. This trends has given rise to a general need for a synthetic view-point. Moreover, as Wilfred Cantwell Smith says, in moderns times it is a moral obligation to understand one another's cultural traditions. He thinks that 'isolationism' is no more tenable and hence no culture can afford to ignore the 'values and convictions' of other cultures.¹

A comparative study of different philosophies having different springs and sources of inspiration is self-rewarding even if they seem to represent divergent interests and divergent points of view. But this comparative study is all the more fruitful with regard to philosophies springing from the same soil but deriving inspiration from two different religions and cultures as is the case with the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal. That is why, we have undertaken a comparative study of their philosophies.

1. Wilfred Cantwell Smith : Islam in Modern History, pp. vi-vii (Preface).

From academic point of view, the present study endeavours to bring to light some basic similarities in two important movements of world philosophy, viz., Muslim philosophy and Hindu philosophy.

As the 'Anekāntavāda'¹ of the Jaina School in Indian Philosophy suggests, the Truth is one but it may have many aspects. Each view-point seizes upon any one aspect of the Truth and approaches it in its own way. Some great thinkers and reformers of the world have tried to apply this 'Anekāntavāda' to great religions of the world and have upheld the doctrine of the essential unity of all religions.² However, it will be even more fruitful if this spirit is incorporated in philosophical thinking which disregards and transcends all barriers in the pursuit of truth. This approach seems to be specially called for when we are dealing with religious philosophies. Religion, unfortunately, has often been exploited by interested persons and parties to promote disunity.

1. i.e., the doctrine of Many points of view.

2. Thus Tolstoi has said, "There is one height of truth and there are those who approach from all sides, as many sides as there are radii in a circle, that is to say, by routes of an infinite variety. Let us work, then, with all our strength to arrive at this light of truth which unites us all".

— Quoted from 'Ārya', 8th NO (Pondicherry) P.502. Similar views have been expressed by Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi and Maulānā Abul Kalām Azād.

and dissensions among the mankind. But if different religions, in their pristine glory, are approached philosophically and their best elements and values are collected and synthesised together, it will not only enhance and enrich our vision but will also foster mutual respect and tolerance for one another's points of view which has become so very essential in the modern world.

In fact such a synthesis was intended by Sri Aurobindo himself and it constituted one of the objectives in publishing his philosophical monthly, 'Ārya'. He described this objective on the title page of 'Ārya' in the following words: "The formation of a vast synthesis of knowledge, harmonising the diverse religious traditions of humanity occidental as well as oriental"¹.

Iqbal is also fully alive to the need and importance of such a synthesis. As a matter of fact, he considers the Muslim civilization to be a product of the cross-fertilisation of the semitic and the Aryan ideas. He says, "It is a child who inherits the softness and refinement of his Aryan mother, and the sterling character of his semitic father."² We may interpret these two aspects as symbolising the

1. Ārya, No.1 (Pondicherry, 1914).

2. Iqbal : Stray Reflections, (Lahore, 1961) pp. 49-50.

speculative bias and the dynamic spirit of the civilization. It was this dynamic spirit of Islam and its concern for day-to-day life in the world that received appreciation from Swami Vivekananda. He recommends the synthesis of the practical side of Islam with the spirit of Vedantism — "Vedanta brain and Islam body"¹ — as essential for the general good of mankind.¹

However, we are not concerned here directly with the study of Hinduism and Islam as two religions of the world. Nor do we intend to evolve any synthetic world religion or a federation of religions. Our aim in these pages is to discuss the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal which are, per chance, based on the religions. Hence, it may be emphasized that our reference to religions is to be taken as of indirect significance only.

Here, the question may arise as to the reason why Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have been particularly chosen for this comparative study. In this connection it may be asserted that there is a great similarity between the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal which arrests our attention when we go through the works of these two great thinkers

1. "Selections from Swami Vivekananda" (Calcutta, 1963) p. 593.

of India. It may be pointed out that the assertion of similarities between the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal is not a matter of personal whim or private judgment alone. On the contrary, the writer of this thesis is in good company in holding this opinion. Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha, writing on Iqbal's poetry and his message, expresses the opinion that "A comparative study of the teachings of Iqbal and Aurobindo, from the pen of a duly qualified scholar, would prove highly instructive."¹ Similarly, Professor P.T.Raju, while discussing Iqbal's philosophy, finds occasions to compare Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal on several points such as their concepts of superman, their emphasis on action and their denunciation of asceticism and "the negative attitude to the world."²

As a matter of fact, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have fought against the passivity and inaction of their age. Both are one in thinking that the decadence and inertia of the peoples is the result of the doctrines of illusoriness of the world and self-negation. Both stand for the resurgence of the spirituality of the East in its pristine glory which, according to them, comprises the synthesis of the spiritual aspiration of man and the all directional and opulent development of life

1. Dr. Sachchidananda Sinha : Iqbal, The poet and His Message, pp. 37-38.

2. P.T.Raju : Idealistic Thought of India (London, 1953). pp. 389-90.

in the world. Both aim at a reinterpretation and reconstruction of their respective religious philosophies in the light of the requirements of modern scientific age. In short, we can say that whatever service Sri Aurobindo has rendered to Hinduism, by trying to present it in its true and original form, removing all the interpolations and pollutions in the original stream, Iqbal has also done the same to Islam and Islamic thought.

Hence the object of our present thesis is a comparative study of the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal with special reference to their concepts of the ideal of human life. We have emphasised the 'Ideal' of human life for our study because it forms the most vital part of their philosophies. In fact the dynamic spirit of their philosophies and their original contribution lie in this direction. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are inspired by practical motives, in constructing their philosophies.

Sri Aurobindo found that the old commentaries of Vedas and Upanishads had generally led the people to asceticism and renunciation of the world. In this connection, he particularly criticised Shankara whose commentaries, in his opinion, were largely responsible for preaching inaction and passivity.¹ Shankara gave an analogy of the illusion of snake in the rope

1. Sri Aurobindo : Thoughts and Aphorisms, p. 49.

to illustrate the relation between the world and Brahman. Thus though Brahman is the substratum or basis (आस्पदम्) of the world, it is the distortion of the original Reality produced by Māyā. Hence the world cannot be regarded as real. Just as on attaining the knowledge of the real substratum behind the snake (i.e. rope), the illusion of snake disappears; in the same way the knowledge of Brahman makes the illusory world disappear. In this way Shankara's philosophy came to be known as (मायावाद) (illusionism).¹ One natural corollary of such a philosophy, according to Sri Aurobindo, was to regard the self-absorption in the featureless absolute as the true ideal of human life. Sri Aurobindo thinks that the consequence of such a view of life and the world was inaction and escape from the world. Sri Aurobindo regards such an ideal as suicidal to human life. Thus in one of his letters to his younger brother, Barinder Kumar, Sri Aurobindo wrote: "The mind's means to reach the infinite are Sanyasa, Moksha and Nirvana, and it has no others. One man or another may get indeed this featureless Moksha, but what is the gain? The Brahman, the self, God are always there. What God wants in man is to embody Himself here in the individual and in the community, to realise God in life."²

1. S.Radhakrishnan has tried to prove that Shankara's philosophy is not illusionism. But, however, he admits that there "are some passages in Shankara which lead us to think that he tended to regard the world as a mere human presentation of the genuinely real, and others where he is inclined to make the world of experience objective and independent of the finite individuals"

— S.Radhakrishnan : Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 587.

2. Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education Vol.xiv, No.3, (Pondicherry) "A Letter of Sri Aurobindo," pp. 4-6.

Further, Sri Aurobindo says that it was the Ideal of self-negation and unreality of the world that is responsible for poverty of life and degeneration in India leading to the British subjugation. It was in this spirit that he started on the difficult voyage of interpreting and reconstructing the old Vedic religion in its original spirit. He preached the Ideal of opulent, active and powerful life which was so very essential for humanity's welfare. The attempt at awakening Indians to the realisation of their responsibilities and their liberation from British yoke also lay in this Ideal.

Sri Aurobindo rejected the idea of the unreality or illusoriness of the world. He upheld the oneness of Brahman and at the same time the reality of the world —. He sought to redefine the old Shankarite Advaita Vedānta in the following way: "The real Monism, the true Advaita, is that which admits all things as the one Brahman and does not seek to bisect its existence into two incompatible entities, an eternal Truth and an eternal Falsehood, Brahman and not Brahman, self and not self, a real self and an unreal, yet perpetual Maya.¹"

Thus Sri Aurobindo's philosophy was a challenge to all those philosophies which preached escapism and asceticism. And this was his motive and purpose in taking up the work of reinterpreting the Vedas and Upanishads. He believed that

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Life Divine, Vol.I, (Calcutta 1939) p. 47.

his was the true representation of Vedic wisdom. According to him the highest ideal, the 'summum bonum' of man was not self-annihilation at the point of salvation. As a matter of fact, his ideal was that of self-affirmation and self-fulfilment. He was full of admiration for Buddha who adopted active life even after attaining to Nirvana.

Exactly in the same way, Iqbal was also confronted with the similar problems. He found the Muslim nations sunk in deep slumber and inertia. He was convinced that the passivity of his people was due to certain class of Sufies who regarded self-annihilation as the highest goal of human life. Iqbal's philosophy marks a revolt against all such philosophies which uphold the doctrines of unreality of the world and self-negation. He thinks that the renunciation of the worldly life is the outcome of illusionistic philosophies. He wages a war against all such philosophers and Sufies. In the introduction to "The Secrets of the Self" which is an English translation by R.A. Nicholson of his "Asrār-e Khudī", Iqbal wrote : "The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation, and he attains to this ideal by becoming more and more individual, more and more unique. The prophet said, 'Takhallaqū bi-Akhlāq Allāh', 'create in yourself the attributes of God.' Thus man becomes unique by becoming more and more like the most unique Individual."
(i.e. God).¹

1. pp. xviii - xix.

Thus we see that Iqbal condemned the doctrine of dissolution of the human self into the featureless Absolute as an ideal of inaction and poverty of life. This point becomes all the more emphatic and marked when we read Iqbal's letter to Dr. Z.A.Siddiqi. Iqbal wrote this letter to him in reply to his letter. Iqbal has explained the main spirit of his message in this letter. He writes: ".....most of the Indian and Persian mystics have interpreted this problem of "Fanā"¹ under the influence of Vedantic philosophy and Buddhism. The result is that Mussalmans today are wholly incapable of action. It is my conviction that this interpretation was more fatal than the fall of Baghdad. All my writings, in a way, are a kind of protest against this interpretation.²" In this way, we can see how Iqbal is also opposed to the Ideal of self-negation. Just like Sri Aurobindo, he also hold self-fulfilment as the highest ideal of human life. In this connection, he admires the Prophet of Islam also who having attained the highest spiritual realisation — "Mairāj" (ascension to heavens) — preferred to return back to earth and work for the liberation of the humanity adopting the life of action.

Thus it is clear, how much Iqbal is opposed to the ideal of self-negation as it leads to asceticism and poverty

1. Self-annihilation.

2. Z.A.Siddiqi : Dialectical Materialism and other Essays, (Aligarh 1958), pp. 63-64.

of life. Iqbal regards it to be the cause of the downfall and subjugation of Muslim nations by foreign rulers. Hence by presenting the true interpretation of Islamic philosophy and culture, Iqbal inspires the Muslim world¹ to embrace the ideal of powerful living and cut off the chains of slavery and subjugation. In fact, it was a deep conviction of both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal that the political freedom is the essential pre-condition for the regeneration of the spirituality.

In this way we see that there are many points of similarity in the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Iqbal. Both of them regard the philosophies preaching self-negation and resultant asceticism as a misinterpretation of their respective religio-philosophical traditions. Both are convinced that such philosophies received "exaggerated proportions"² in times of decadence and decline. Thus the spirituality came to be associated with the poverty of life and inaction. But, both of them believe that since this kind of spirituality was based on the mistaken concepts of God, man

1. Apparently, Iqbal addressed Muslim world alone, but his message was for the whole humanity. His choice of Muslim society was inspired by pragmatic expediency. For, he had believed that the practical application of a humanitarian ideal is always specific and particular.

2. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, p. 16.

and the universe, it cannot be regarded as a true spirituality. Sri Aurobindo goes to the extent of regarding such spirituality as a 'morbid' or corrupt spirituality.¹

Ordinarily, spirituality is supposed to be an anti-thesis of material or mundane point of view. Hence, to discard bodily activities, renunciation of the world and leading a life of prayers, fasting, contemplation etc., are considered to be the marks of spirituality. However, Sri Aurobindo believes that the original teaching of Vedas and Upanishads do not support this conception of spirituality. According to him, "spirituality itself does not flourish on earth in the void., even as our mountain-tops do not rise like those of an enchantment of dream out of the clouds without a base."² Criticising the mistaken conception of spirituality, he says, "A few Sanyasis and Bairagis to be saintly and perfect and liberated, a few Bhaktas to dance in a mad ecstasy of love and sweet emotion and Ananda, and a whole race to become lifeless, void of intelligence, sunk in deep *tamas* — is this the effect of a true spirituality? No."³ Again giving us the true meaning of spirituality he says, "By

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, p. 16.

2. Ibid., p. 26.

3. Op.cit. p. 7, foot note No.2.

spirituality we do not mean a remote metaphysical mind or the tendency to dream rather than to act.¹ Thus a true spirituality, in Sri Aurobindo's view, "must not belittle the mind, life or body or hold them of small account."²

Similarly Iqbal also criticises that notion of spirituality which is equivalent to renunciation of worldly life. There are many Urdu and Persian verses of Iqbal which oppose the one-sided notion of spirituality. Thus he says that he stood up grief-stricken from the school and monastery. There is to be found no life, no love, no gnosis, and no insight.³ In another work, he says that if you are unable to solve the problems of the world, your ecstasy in celestial thoughts is bad.⁴ Iqbal is against the popular concept of the bifurcation of man into spirit and body. It is this erroneous distinction which misleads us to believe that some actions of man are spiritual and the rest physical or mundane. According to Iqbal, man is neither spirit alone nor body alone but an organic unity of the two. His actions proceed from the whole

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, pp. 42-43.

2. Ibid., p. 64.

3. اثما میں مدرسہ و خانقاہ سے غمناک * نہ زندگی نہ محبت نہ معرفت نہ نگاہ
— Bāl-e-Jibrīl, p. 70.

4. اگر نہ سہل ہوں تجھ پر زمین کے ہنگامے * بری ہم مستی اندیشہ ہائے افلاکی
— Zarb-e-Kalīm., p. 6.

being. However, there is an urge in man for becoming better and better. He wants to assimilate the attributes of perfection, or the divine attributes as we may call them. This urge for perfection may be called the moral or spiritual urge or the divine urge in man. For its realisation, it is not necessary that a man should discard his bodily needs or worldly life. He should lead the worldly life in a way so as to have his gaze fixed always on God. He should remember God in all his actions. This is true humanity or true spirituality, if one may choose to call it so.

In short, we see that the spirituality as preached by Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal is a dynamic spirituality. It combines with itself the vigorous and opulent afflorescence of life. Positively speaking, both of them think that a true spiritual seeker should easily adjust himself to the external world through mastering and remoulding it to suit his own purposes.

Generally speaking the ascetic attitude towards life is the product of philosophy which regards the world as illusory or in some sense unreal. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal refute such philosophy. According to them, this world is real. According to Sri Aurobindo, the world is the real transformation of the real Brahman. In other words, it is a manifestation of Brahman itself. Hence Sri Aurobindo pertinently asks that if the gold is real, how the pot which is

made of that gold can be a mirage. However, to distinguish the world and Brahman, he says that it is not the essential truth of Brahman but only a phenomenal truth of Brahman. Similarly for Iqbal the world and everything it contains is real. In fact, as the Quran teaches, in every thing of the universe, there are signs of God for the people of understanding. Thus about the universe Iqbal says, "It is a reality to be reckoned with."¹ Further Iqbal too does not identify the world with God but only regards it as the symbol of God.²

Another important similarity between Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal refers to their views on Evolution. Both of them reject the mechanical interpretation of evolution and believe in a sort of spiritual evolution. Sri Aurobindo says that since the scientific or mechanical theory of evolution was largely based on Materialism and since Materialism is now rapidly collapsing, the materialistic interpretation of the theory of evolution must also disappear.³ Sri Aurobindo's concept of evolution is based on the fact of prior involution of the Brahman in the material inconscience. Thus Matter is not a dead Matter but only a state of sleep of consciousness. Thus

1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction of Religions Thought in Islam (Lahore 1944), p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

3. Sri Aurobindo : Evolution, p. 2.

for him, evolution is the unfoldment or manifestation of the involved Brahman.

Similarly Iqbal also thinks the mechanical concept of evolution as unworkable in explaining life. He says that a living organism is quite different from a worked machine and hence the mechanical laws cannot be applicable to life. Iqbal believes that the ultimate Reality "reveals its symbols both within and without."¹ And this act of revelation is "self-revelation"² in a gradual manner. Thus whatever comes into existence through evolution is not the result of blind physico-chemical laws but the conscious Spirit's will to manifest itself.

As a corollary of their concepts of evolution, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal believe that the process of evolution has not yet come to an end. In fact, the universe and man are not the finished product of evolution but that they are full of infinite possibilities of development and they are still striving to achieve their perfection. Hence Sri Aurobindo regards man as only a "Transitional being" —³ his ultimate

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1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam p. 16.
 2. Ibid., p. 61.
 3. Sri Aurobindo : The life Divine, Vol. II, Part II (Calcutta 1939), p. 630.

destiny lying in what he makes of himself in future. Thus man is destined to become superman in course of his evolution. On the aforegoing point, Iqbal also agrees with Sri Aurobindo. He says, "It is not a block universe a finished product, immobile and incapable of change. Deep in its inner being lies, perhaps, the dream of a new birth.¹" In this connection Iqbal criticises the modern scientific theory of evolution as it ends in pessimism, there are no future possibilities of man open to a materialist. Here Iqbal subscribes with the view of Jalāluddīn Rūmī who believes that man has yet to develop in his still higher form (i.e. Supermanhood).²

The similarities between Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are not confined to a few isolated concepts. In fact, they are born of their similar reactions to the conditions prevailing in India of those days. Both the philosophers were born in an age which was deeply sunk in inaction and passivity due to the adoption of a mistaken view of spirituality. They had believed that spirituality best flourishes in the poverty of life and the weakness and humility of life.³ Moreover, they were still clinging to old ways dogmatically regardless of the changed conditions of their times. There was no life-power

1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction of R.T. in Islam, p. 10.

2. Ibid., pp. 121-22.

3. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, pp. 15-16.

left in them. The decadence born of political subjugation made them believers in fatalism. They lacked initiative and drive. The result was that those people with their set attitudes and values were poorly adjusted to the modern world. They lagged behind in the march of material progress and scientific development. For them scientific progress was a gross indulgence in the evil world, the inaction and passivity the highest ideal. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal observed these conditions and both became convinced that their religions and cultural traditions stand in great need of re-interpretation and reconstruction in view of the demand of modern times. It was in response to this demand that Sri Aurobindo started his philosophical quest. Particularly, he wrote "The Essays on the Gita," with the expressed desire of reconstruction of the past heritage of Indian culture. In the same way, with the same purpose, Iqbal gave a series of lectures at Madras, Hyderabad, Mysore and Aligarh which have since been published in the book form under the title, "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam."

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal had thought that it was due to the passive attitude on life that the nations become subjugated by the foreign powers. It was true in the case of India also. However, Sri Aurobindo believes that the European influx proved beneficial in one sense that it helped the stirring of intellectual activity and the emergence of dynamic

outlook on life.¹ Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal believe that now the renaissance ⁱⁿ the East, particularly in India, has begun to work. The need of reconstruction of traditional thought has also been recognised. All the writings of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal sound this note of the beginning of renaissance in the East and it is in this context that the message of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal should be read.

In Hinduism the work of liberal interpretation and reconstruction of religious traditions to fit in new moulds was already started in the days of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahmo Samaj movement. The services of Swami Vivekananda in this connection were the most remarkable. Among Muslims, the efforts of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his associates, Chiragh Ali, in particular, are noteworthy in connection with the reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. They attempted to bring out the dynamic nature of Islam. Thus Chiragh Ali in his book "Proposed Reforms" tried to prove that Islam possesses enough plasticity to adopt itself to the changing needs of the changing world.

The place of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal is very important in this field of reconstruction. Both of them have worked for renaissance in India which had already started but found its most powerful expression in them. In a way, these two

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, p. 16.

philosophers may be regarded as having accomplished the task of reinterpreting the Hindu and Muslim thoughts better than any of their immediate predecessors. According to Sri Aurobindo, however true and real a Truth may be, it possesses two elements : "one temporary, perishable, belonging to the ideas of the period and country in which it was produced, the other eternal and imperishable and applicable in all ages and countries."¹ Thus the former element of the truth always stands in need of modification in view of changing conditions. If this dynamic aspect of a truth is neglected, it cannot be serviceable to the developing humanity.

The need of reconstruction of the spirituality of the East in its pristine glory became all the more imperative in view of the increasing intellectualism and materialism which brought with them the seeds of irreligiosity and atheism. Moreover, the materialistic approach was tending to produce greater and greater individualism which was a threat to the social and collective values of life. Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal responded to this call of the hour. Both of them wanted their peoples to adopt spirituality in life and they also showed that the true spirituality does not negate life in the world.

1. Sri Aurobindo : Essays on the Gita, p. 3.

They further showed that religion and science are not opposed to each other as is wrongly held in certain quarters. The moment science recognises its limits and begins to entertain the possibility of sources of knowledge other than sense-experience, it becomes reconcilable with religion. Both of them believe in the possibility of this reconciliation and both are optimistic about future. Iqbal even goes so far as to say that modern relativity physics is no more in sympathy with the kind of materialism which regarded solidity as an essential attribute of Matter. So, for him, the day is not far when religion and science will be harmonised with each other.¹

The fact that the materiality of matter is being replaced by energy or force (or consciousness-force, as Sri Aurobindo would call it) is bringing science and religion closer to each other. The gulf between Matter and spirit is gradually being bridged. The possibility of synthesis of Matter and spirit has also been emphasised greatly by Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Consequently, the west which supposedly stood for the Matter alone and the East which supposedly stood for spirit alone, have been brought together in their philosophies. We have already seen that according to both Sri

1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction (Preface), p. vi.

Aurobindo and Iqbal, the spirituality is fully consistent with the richness and prolificness of life. Thus in their systems, spirituality and life in the world are also synthesised. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal agree on the point that the religion, to be the true guide of man, must be based on sound rational approach. Moreover, they are convinced that in order philosophy may be of any value to man, empirical knowledge should be synthesised with the intuitive knowledge. Thus we may be justified in saying that the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are the philosophies of synthesis and reconciliation. Many a contradiction which has been confronting humanity are resolved in their systems.

Thus we have seen, in brief outline, that the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have many fundamental points of similarity. Both have held the ideal of human life as self-fulfilment or self-realisation in opposition with the ideal of self-negation. Both lay stress on the synthesis of spirituality and the active and vigorous life in the world. Both are inspired by the love of man and the earth. Both earnestly preach the ideal of human unity and brotherhood. Both think political freedom necessary for the spiritual development. Both believe in the infinite possibilities of man's development.

In short, this is our justification for undertaking a comparative study of the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and

Iqbal. It is, in a way, a new venture. It not only explores the basic similarities between the philosophies of two great thinkers of India, but it also brings to light the fundamental affinities between two great philosophies of the East — the Hindu philosophy and the Muslim philosophy.

Before concluding this introduction, it seems proper to give, in brief, the plan of the thesis with regard to various chapters into which it has been divided. It has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter — Biographical Facts and the Historical Background of the Philosophies — deals with the inner development of the two philosophers and throws light on those environmental factors which contributed to the shaping of their philosophical thoughts. The second chapter — the Sources of Knowledge — discusses some epistemological problems, particularly, the methods of philosophy which the two philosophers have recognised. The third chapter — Nature of God, Universe and Man — deals with the metaphysical position of Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Iqbal. It is necessary to know the views regarding these problems because one's practical philosophy or his ethical views are, generally, dependent on his metaphysical position. The fourth chapter — The Ideal of Human Life — forms, in fact, the central theme of our study. It discusses the views of the two philosophers with regard to the 'Ideal' of human life, its nature as conceived in

the past, their own concepts and their constitutive elements, the way to the attainment of the 'Ideal', and its social implications. The last chapter — The Conclusion — naturally makes a review of the whole study and its basic results and tries to relate them with the main aim of the study.

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C H A P T E R I

BIOGRAPHICAL FACTS AND THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

All the great thinkers have been influenced by their environments, and, in turn, they have also influenced, remoulded and reshaped the currents of thought in their surroundings. So to understand and appreciate their contribution, it is always useful to know some important facts about their lives and period. In the case of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, it is all the more important because their philosophies have evolved as a direct response to the challenge of their times. Thus a knowledge of the biographical facts and environmental influences will help us know the inner development of the two philosophers. It will also help us in understanding those factors in their environment and their periods which contributed to the making of their personalities and thought-patterns. It is in this context that we undertake to study certain biographical facts and historical background relating to Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal.

To avoid confusion and to preserve systematic presentation of facts, we propose to deal with the two philosophers separately in the following sections. At the end, we shall emphasise some fundamental similarities in their inner development and in their reactions to their environments.

A. LIFE OF SRI AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo Ghose was born on 15th August, 1872 in Calcutta. His father Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose, a civil surgeon, was a completely anglicised Bengali. He was a lover of western culture. Sri Aurobindo's mother was the daughter of Rishi Rajnarayan Bose who was the president of the Calcutta Brahmo Samaj. Sri Aurobindo's mother suffered unfortunately from lunacy. Sri Aurobindo had two elder brothers, a younger brother and a sister. Sri Aurobindo's father was mainly responsible for the early training of his children. Being thoroughly westernised, he did not like any Indian influence in the up-bringing of his children. He had kept a butler who would not talk to the children in Bengali, their mother-tongue, but in English or in broken Hindustani. Upto the age of five Sri Aurobindo lived with his parents.

In 1877, when Aurobindo was five-year-old, Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose got him and two of his elder brothers admitted in Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling. Here all education was imparted through English medium. A dream of Sri Aurobindo during this period is worth-mentioning. He himself relates it : "I was lying down one day when I saw suddenly a great darkness rushing into me and enveloping me and the whole universe."¹ In his later life, Sri Aurobindo interpreted this

1. Evening Talks, 10.3.1943.

darkness as signifying those western influences in his education and training which had made him almost an atheist.

Two years later, in 1879, Sri Aurobindo, with his brothers and sister, was taken to England for their education. Sri Aurobindo was seven years of age at that time. He stayed there from 1879 to 1892. Sri Aurobindo returned back to India at the age of twenty one and thus we see that the most important and formative period of his life was spent in England.

Sri Aurobindo's first five years in England were spent with Mr. and Mrs. Drewett with whom he was putting up at Manchester. Due to his young age at that time, he was not sent to school. Therefore, the Drewetts taught him at home. During this period, young Aurobindo found out time to read the Bible and Shakespeare, Shelly, Keats and others. He was not interested in games. Upto this time, Sri Aurobindo did not know anything about India or Indian way of life. The Drewetts were strictly warned by Sri Aurobindo's father against any Indian influence touching him.

While at St. Paul's, London, Sri Aurobindo became a favourite student of Dr. Walker. Here in this school, Sri Aurobindo distinguished himself by his brilliant academic achievements. As a rule, Sri Aurobindo had a reserved nature — always given only to himself. His outward behaviour was very gentle and amicable. During this period, he had to

undergo some financial difficulties. However, he got a senior classics scholarship to join King's College, Cambridge. He also got a stipend for the I.C.S. probationership.

During his early years at St. Paul's, Sri Aurobindo had devoted himself to the study of the classics and the English language. Later on, he studied French literature, Greek and the history of Europe. Italian and German languages were also learnt by him. During the period under review, he also wrote a poem, 'Hacuba' which was very much appreciated by Laurence Binyon. We can have an idea about Sri Aurobindo's interests and ambitions during this period from his own words: "The Revolt of Islam' was a great favourite with me even when I was quite young and I used to read it again and again. Of course, without understanding everything. But evidently it appealed to some part of the being. There was no other effect of reading it except this that I had a thought that I would dedicate my life to a similar world change and take part in it."

Sri Aurobindo was a very hard-working student. While he was in the first class of the Classical Tripos, part I, he was also preparing for the I.C.S. examination without help from anybody. He appeared in I.C.S. examination and passed it securing 11th position. But due to his failure in riding

1. Evening Talks, 28.6.1926.

test he was not finally selected. However, the failure in riding test was rather deliberate and self-willed as he did not like to join government service. He had appeared, as he himself tells us, in the examination simply for the reason of not annoying his family.¹

Though Sri Aurobindo's father was an admirer of the western culture, he did not like the British domination over India. Usually he would write to his children pointing out to them the oppressive policy of the British Government in India. It was due to this that at any early age of fifteen, Sri Aurobindo made up his mind to serve the cause of his country's independence. While he was at Cambridge, he became for some time the secretary of the 'Indian Majlis' and often took part in the debates. He was quite a revolutionary in criticising British rule in India. He supported then the policy of aggressive nationalism.

After Sri Aurobindo had failed in I.C.S. examination, James Cotton got him introduced to the Gaikwad of Baroda, Sri Sayaji Rao. The Gaikwad happily agreed to appoint Sri Aurobindo to his Baroda State Service.

1. "Sri Aurobindo on Himself and the Mother", (p.12). This book contains biographical notes by Sri Aurobindo about himself and about the Mother, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry.

In December, 1892, Sri Aurobindo sailed for India in the "Carthage". He reached Appolo Bunder, Bombay in February, 1893. His father had died before Sri Aurobindo's arrival in India. It is said that by some mistake the wrong news about Sri Aurobindo's death in some shipwreck was conveyed to him. It gave him such a shock that he could not survive.¹

As soon as Sri Aurobindo put down his feet on Appolo Bunder, he began to feel a tremendous and extraordinary peace which lasted for a pretty long time. Later on, he regarded it a spiritual experience.

After coming to India and joining the Baroda State Service in 1893, the first concern of Sri Aurobindo was to equip himself with the wealth of Indian wisdom and culture. He began to study voraciously. He mastered Bengali and Sanskrit so that he might go to the original sources of Indian philosophy. This was in a way the preparatory period of Sri Aurobindo's politico-spiritual career. Though he was quite successful and had distinguished himself in the Baroda State Service, yet it was unsuited to his taste. His real interest lay in the pursuit of knowledge. Hence he became a lecturer in French language at the Baroda College and was soon appointed as Professor of English. Later on he was made the Vice Principal of that college.

1. R.R.Diwakar : "Mahayogi", p. 36.

As mentioned earlier the seeds of patriotism were already sown in Sri Aurobindo's mind while he was in Cambridge. After his return to India, he found that Indian National Congress needed re-organisation. He wanted to invigorate it for effective action. K.G.Deshpande who already knew Sri Aurobindo as high-spirited nationalist from his Cambridge days, requested him to contribute political articles to his "Indu Prakash", a weekly, of which Deshpande was the editor. Sri Aurobindo complied with his request and contributed a series of articles under the title, "New Lamps for Old" from 9th August, 1893 to February, 1894. These articles contained a severe criticism of the mendicant policy of Indian National Congress. Hence K.G.Deshpande became afraid lest he should be prosecuted for sedition. Consequently this series was discontinued. While in Baroda, Sri Aurobindo's political activities were of the secret type. That is why he did not mention his name in "Indu Prakash". At Baroda in April, 1901, Sri Aurobindo married Mrinalini, the daughter of Bhupal Chandra Bose of Jessore who had settled in Ranchi.

Sri Aurobindo had happy relations with his wife, Mrinalini. But his busy political activities and other circumstances did not permit him to live with his wife for most of the time. However, his love and affection for his wife is evident from the long letters that he wrote to her. These

letters contain a wealth of information regarding the inner development and politico-spiritual ambitions of Sri Aurobindo. When Sri Aurobindo left for Pondicherry in 1910, for spritual Sādhanā, his wife could not meet him for a long time. In 1918, he allowed Mrinalini to visit him in Pondicherry; but on her way, she got a severe attack of influenza and died in Calcutta.

As we know, Sri Aurobindo was an extremist and radical in his political views. He favoured violence as a means of achieving the goal of freedom. In 1902, during the days of the partition of Bengal, he went there to organise a secret revolutionary society. He is also said to have written two booklets, "Bhavanī Mandir" and "No Compromise". These booklets helped the political awakening to a great extent. In 1904-5 he again went to Calcutta to recruit new members for the revolutionary society. In August, 1906, he left Baroda service and became the principal of newly started National College (now the Jadavapur University) in Calcutta. Here he had to bear all alone the burden of editing "Bande Mātaram" weekly. This period of Sri Aurobindo was marked by the most vigorous activities. Consequently he suffered from serious illness from October to the beginning of December, 1906.

For enlisting support for his revolutionary ideas, Sri Aurobindo made extensive tours. On 19th January, 1908, he

addressed the National Union at Bombay. On 1st February, 1908, he delivered a speech at Nagpur. He was arrested on suspicion in Alipore Bomb case¹ on 4th May 1908. He stayed in Alipore Jail as an under trial prisoner upto May 6, 1909. Then he was released from the jail as no charge could be established against him.

It was during this trial of Sri Aurobindo under Alipore Bomb case that the advocate, Chitteranjan Das, addressed the judge, Mr. Beach Croft pleading for Sri Aurobindo in the following words which are almost a prophecy about his future greatness. Thus Chitteranjan Das said, ".....long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil and the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India but across distant seas and lands....."²

After his release, Sri Aurobindo delivered the historic speech at Uttarpārā on 30th May, 1909. This speech/turn reveals a decisive

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1. On 30th April, 1908, some revolutionaries threw a bomb at the car of some British dignitaries mistaking them for Mr. Kingsford, the District Magistrate.
 2. R.R.Diwakor : Mahayogi, p. 76.

in his spiritual development.¹ After his acquittal, he stayed at the Sanjivani Office in Calcutta. He came out of the jail as a quite changed man. He was now a sobre thinker and a yogi instead of a revolutionary politician. He conducted the publication of "Karmayogin", a weekly in English and "Dharma", a Bengali Weekly. He wrote on nationalism, literature, science and philosophy through these papers.

Meanwhile due to the repressive policy of the British Government, the political activity was at a low ebb in the country. Through his writings and speeches, Sri Aurobindo tried to awaken the enthusiasm of the people but without any great effect. However, what he was doing in this direction was very annoying to the British rulers. And even there was some talk of deporting Sri Aurobindo.² He was thinking what to do. In these circumstances, he felt some divine command to leave British India for Chandernagore which was then in French possession. Consequently he left Calcutta and reached Chandernagore in February, 1910.

This marks the culmination of Sri Aurobindo's active participation in politics. Here it may be surmised that he

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1. We shall write about this speech in some detail when we come to the discussion about Sri Aurobindo's spiritual experiences.
 2. Bhuvaneshwarnath Mishra : Shri Arvind-Charitāmrit (Hindi) (Pondicherry, 1963), p. 116.

left active politics due to the fear of British Government. However, the truth seems to be otherwise. In fact, the Alipore jail-life had changed the course of Sri Aurobindo's life. The call from the realm of spirit was for him of prime importance and he believed, as he tells us, in obeying the divine commands. He was now determined to follow this newly discovered spiritual path. This does not mean that he had forsaken his goal of attaining freedom. He still believed that freedom is essential for spiritual development of humanity and spiritual development, in turn, supports the freedom movement. But since he believed that he had a call from the spiritual realm, he left active participation in politics to others and himself took the work of spiritual Sādhnā. Thus he simply changed his line of action. He was convinced that spiritual power or the power of Brahman based on knowledge can also help liberate the country. He felt that he had a divine mission for the spiritual uplift of humanity in general and Indian nation in particular. So he came to Chandernagore and after about a month, he finally came to Pondicherry on 4th April, 1910.

Sri Aurobindo later described Pondicherry as "my place of retreat, my cave of Tapasya, not of the ascetic kind but of

a brand of my own invention.¹ The different phases of Sri Aurobindo's life have been referred to by K.R.Srinivasa Iyengar in the following words : "The poet and humanist of the Baroda period gave place to the patriot and prophet and Nationalist evangel of the Calcutta period, and he too gave place at the appointed time to the philosopher and yogi and pilgrim of Eternity of the Pondicherry period."²

After coming to Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo began to lead almost a secluded life. He would sometimes observe fasts. His whole time was devoted to the Yog-Sādhnā and reading and writing on philosophy and literature. On 29th March, 1914 Mr. Paul Richard and Mrs. Paul Richard (now the Mother of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry) met Sri Aurobindo and were impressed very much by Sri Aurobindo's personality. They liked Sri Aurobindo's spiritual mission. It was on this visit of the Richards that Sri Aurobindo started publishing "Ārya"

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1. An extract from a letter of Sri Aurobindo in 1920 to Joseph Baptista, a well-known barrister of Bombay and a member of Lokmanya Tilak's Nationalist Party.

— A.B.Purani : The Life of Sri Aurobindo, p.157.

2. "Sri Aurobindo Circle No.1" (Bombay, 1945), K.C.S. Iyengar: Sri Aurobindo's Life and Thought, p. 126.

philosophical monthly journal in collaboration with them. The first issue of the journal appeared on the birth day of Sri Aurobindo, that is, 15th August, 1914. Due to some unavoidable reasons, Mr. and Mrs. Richard returned back to France in 1915. The publication of the "Ārya" was continued upto 1921. Almost all the great bulk of Sri Aurobindo's writings had appeared in this journal. Since then they have been published in book-forms.

The Mother came again to India on 24th April, 1920 and finally settled in Pondicherry as the co-worker in Sri Aurobindo's spiritual mission. By this time, a few disciples had also centred round Sri Aurobindo to seek from him spiritual guidance and to do Sādhnā there. On 1st Jan., 1922, the Mother took charge of the management of the house in which Sri Aurobindo and his disciples were living. This house gradually developed into the present Ashram named after Sri Aurobindo.

The 24th November, 1924 is described by Sri Aurobindo's devotees as the "Siddhi-Day"¹ (or the day of Victory). It is believed that on this day Sri Aurobindo became successful in bringing down on earth the overmind-consciousness.² After this date, he retired into complete seclusion from public life and did not come out except three times a year for "Darshan" to

1. This day is celebrated every year by Sri Aurobindo's devotees.
2. Overmind is the link between Supermind and mind according to Sri Aurobindo.

his devotees. The Mother and few chosen disciples were allowed to approach him.

Sri Aurobindo still continued to do spiritual Sādhnā. It is said that now he was trying to bring down on earth the Supramental Truth-Consciousness. He spent time also in writing on Yoga and philosophy. Many letters poured in seeking Sri Aurobindo's guidance on questions regarding Yoga and spiritualism. He tried his best to answer all the letters. These letters have now been published in the form of books and constitute a wealth of spiritual wisdom.

On August 15, 1947, India achieved her independence. It was a happy occasion for Sri Aurobindo, more so as this birth-day of new India coincided with his own birth-day. In his independence-day message, he expressed high and noble hopes about India's future greatness and her mission of spiritual leadership of the whole world.

Sri Aurobindo left his corporeal frame on 5th December, 1950 at the age of 78. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, in his condolence message to Sri R.R.Diwakar said: "India will worship and enshrine his memory and place him in the pantheon of its seers and prophets."¹

1. R.R.Diwakar : Mahayogi, pp. 98-99.

(1) Yogic practices and spiritual experiences
of Sri Aurobindo:

Besides his political activities, there was yet another urge in Sri Aurobindo's nature which predisposed him for the quest of spiritual things. This spiritual quest of Sri Aurobindo dates as far back as 1904 when he learnt about Prānāyām practices¹ from one of his friends, Devdhar, an engineer who was a disciple of Swami Brahmanand of Chandod.² Sri Aurobindo began to practise Prānāyām from 1904, devoting to it five to six hours daily. He derived some useful results from this practice, e.g., increased physical and mental activity, sharpened memory and greater concentration. In June, 1906, he paid a visit to Swami Brahmanand of Chandod. In December, 1906, his younger brother, Barinder Kumar Ghose introduced him to a Yogi named Vishnu Bhaskar Lele. Lele agreed to help him in spiritual Sādhnā. Sri Aurobindo remained with him for three days and was able to silence his mind of all mental activities as asked by Lele.³ He himself relates the result of this quititude: "Then I realised the Silent

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1. It is a system of Yogic exercises for the regulation and control of the respiration.
 2. He was incharge of Gangā Math temple of Rangnāth on the bank of Narmadā.
 3. This silencing of the mind is the soul of Patanjali's Yoga which he has defined as the control of the tendencies (चित्तवृत्ति) of the mind.

Brahman Consciousness. I began to think from above the brain ever since.¹ This Yogic state helped him in reading, writing and other activities.

When Sri Aurobindo joined as the principal of National College, Calcutta in 1906, his yogic practices were discontinued due to his awfully busy political activities. But in 1908 when he was confined to Alipore Jail in connection with Alipore Bomb case, he regarded his abode in jail as a good opportunity for resuming his spiritual practices. That is why, he has referred to his jail-life as an " आश्रम-वास " or an abode in harmitage. As we learn from his historic speech at Uttarpara on 30th May 1909, he had reached the climax of spiritual realisation in the jail. He saw everything in jail permeated by Vāsudeva Shri Krishna. Thus in course of his speech he said, "I have spoken of my one year of life in prison. I should have spoken of one year of forest-life, rather Ashram life. The wrath of the British Government did me good and its only result was that I found God."²

In his later days of political life, Sri Aurobindo tried to give a spiritual orientation to politics. In his speech at Jhalakati Conference on 3rd July, 1909, he said,

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1. Evening Talks, 13.4.1923. Quoted from A.B. Purani: The Life of Sri Aurobindo, p. 128.
 2. Bhuvaneshwarnāth Mishra: Shri Arvind Charitāmrita, (Hindi), p. 114.

"It is because God has chosen to manifest himself and has entered into the hearts of his people that we are rising again as a nation." And again, "Swaraj means fulfilment of our national life.¹"

Ever since he was able to silence his mind with Lele, Sri Aurobindo used to listen to his inner voice or divine "Ādesh" as he called it. He was convinced that he needed a human Guru no more. The path of his Yogic Sādhnā was also now very clear to him. In a letter to his younger brother, Barinder in 1920, he had written, "The inner guide, the Universal Teacher, showed me my path entirely. All its essence is contained in the ten-limbs of the yoga. For the last ten year (1910-1920) the Divine has been giving me the experience of that element and developing in me, though the work is not yet finished Without reaching the Supramental, it is impossible to know the ultimate secret of the world. The riddle of the world cannot be solved without it.

"But its attainment is not easy. After fifteen years, I am just now rising to the lowest of the three layers of the Supermind and trying to draw up all my movements into it. But when The Siddhi is complete, then there is no doubt that the

1. A.B.Purani : The Life of Sri Aurobindo, p. 131.

Divine will give the Siddhi of The Supermind to others through me with very little effort. Then my real work will begin...¹"

The foregoing quotation brings into full light the direction of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual Sādhana. He was engaged in the work of bringing about the descent of the higher consciousness. It is said that on 24 Nov. 1926 (the Siddhi-day about which we have talked a little before) Sri Aurobindo succeeded in his efforts towards the fulfilment of his spiritual mission. Sri Aurobindo himself has described this day in the following words, "The 24th November, 1926, was the descent of Krishna into the physical. Krishna is not the Supramental Light. The descent of Krishna would mean the descent of the Overmind Godhead preparing, though not itself actually, the descent of Supermind and Ananda. Krishna is the Anandamaya, he supports the evolution through the overmind leading it towards his Anand.²"

(ii) Inner development of Sri Aurobindo:

When we reflect on the life of Sri Aurobindo, we find that his westernised father played a significant role in his early education and training. It was for this reason that Sri Aurobindo from the very beginning became well-versed in western wisdom and cultural traditions. It was mostly due to

1. A.B.Purani : The Life of Sri Aurobindo, pp. 240-41.

2. Ibid., p. 247.

the western influence that he developed an empirical and positivistic outlook towards the world. His dynamic spirituality and emphasis on action in life was also inspired by the western training. Moreover, the love of freedom and patriotic feelings were also formed in him during his stay in the West. In due course, these elements bloomed in his philosophy. But then, it may be questioned, why he did not break completely from the eastern values and cultural traditions. It was, perhaps, due to the influence of his mother. His mother as we have seen, was the daughter of Rajnarayan Bose who was the president of Brahmo Samāj. That accounts for Sri Aurobindo's thirst for Indian wisdom and love of Indian culture since his arrival in Baroda from England in 1893. Thus we can say that he imbibed what is best in Western and Indian cultures. That is why we find a fine synthesis of the West and the East in the message of Sri Aurobindo. Romain Rolland in his "Prophets of New India," called him "the completest synthesis upto this day of the genius of Europe and the genius of Asia."

After his return from England, Sri Aurobindo's simplicity of life was remarkable. Though he had admired certain bright aspects of western culture, he remained unaffected by its formalistic aspect — its glamour and glitter. Here is an intimate pen-picture of his simple life by Dinendra Kumar Roy, his teacher of Bengali at Baroda : "who could have thought that this darkish youngman with soft dreamy eyes and long, thin,

wavy hair parted in the middle and reaching to the neck, clad in coarse Ahmedabadi Dhoti and close-fitting Indian Jacket, his feet shod in old-fashioned Indian slipper with upturned toes who could have thought that this man could be no other than Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, a living fountain of French, Latin and Greek? But what struck me as most amazing was that his noble heart had suffered not the least contamination from the luxury and dissipation, the glitter and glamour, the diverse impressions and influences, and the strange spell of Western Society.¹"

Sri Aurobindo's letters written to close relations specially to his wife and his younger brother, Barinder Kumar Ghose, throw some important light on his inner development. While in Baroda, Sri Aurobindo's primary pre-occupations were yoga and politics. Thus he wrote to his wife, Mirnālīnī, describing these pre-occupations as madnesses:² "I have three madnesses. Firstly, it is my firm faith that whatever virtue, talent, higher education and knowledge and wealth which God has given me belongs to Him. I have the right to spend only as much as is needed for the maintenance of the family and

1. English version of Dinendra Kumar Roy's "Aurobindo Prasang" (Bengali) published in "The Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Vol. XIII, No. 2, pp. 150-52.

2. The original letters are in Bengali. Here some extracts as translated into English by A.B. Purani have been given.

on what is absolutely necessary. Whatever remains should be returned to the Divine. If I spend all of it on myself, for personal comfort, for enjoyment, then I am a thief The second folly has recently taken hold of me; it is this: by whatever means I must get the direct realisation of the Lord. The religion of today consists in repeating the name of God every now and then, in praying to Him in the presence of everybody and in showing to people how religious one is; I do not want it. If the Divine is there, then there must be a way of experiencing His existence, of realising His presence, however hard the path, I have taken a firm resolution to follow it The third folly is this: Whereas others regard the country as an inert object, and know it as the plains, the fields, the forests, the mountains and rivers, I look upon my country as the mother, I worship her and adore her as the mother. What would a son do when a demon sitting on the breast of his mother is drinking her blood? I know I have the strength to uplift this fallen race, it is not physical strength, I am not going to fight with the sword or with the gun, but with the power of knowledge Leave all these things and come along with me. We have come to the world to do God's work, let us begin it.¹

1. A.B.Purani : The Life of Sri Aurobindo, pp. 99-102.

Another letter of Sri Aurobindo to his wife shows how he was guided by the spiritual Ādesh (command) in his actions. He writes : "My coming to meet you on the 4th January was settled, but I could not come; this did not happen of my own accord. I had to go where the Lord led me. This time I did not go for my own work, I had gone for His work henceforward I am no longer my own master; I will have to go like a puppet wherever the Divine takes me; I shall have to carry out like a puppet whatever he makes me to do all that I do does not depend on my own will, but is done according to the command of the Divine."¹

In his letter to Joseph Baptista on 5th Jan., 1920, Sri Aurobindo has explained the reason of not accepting an offer of the editorship of a news paper which Baptista's party was to start in Bombay. He told him that he was not prepared to leave Pondicherry for the British India as he had come there for spiritual realisation. Explaining his idea of spirituality, he wrote in the letter : "I have always laid a dominant stress and I now lay an entire stress on the spiritual life, but my idea of spirituality has nothing to do with ascetic withdrawal or contempt or disgust of secular things. There is to me nothing secular, all human activity is for me a thing to be included in a complete spiritual life"²

1. A.B.Purani : The Life of Sri Aurobindo, pp. 103-104.

2. Ibid., p. 195.

The above letter gives us a clear view of Sri Aurobindo's ideal of spirituality. Again, in his letter to his younger brother, Barinder Kumar Ghose, Sri Aurobindo explains the need of founding a spiritual commune or Sangha with a well-defined form — not something very vast and formless — to start his work of spiritual regeneration. He says: "There is no effective motion of life without form"¹..... We do not want to leave anything of the world; Politics, Industry, Society, Poetry, Literature. Art will all remain. But we shall have to give them a new soul and a new form You write about the Deva-Sangha, I am not a god, I am only some much hammered and refined iron. No one is God but in each man there is a God and to make him manifest is the aim of divine life...."²

It is a generally accepted fact that the times and the existing socio-political conditions contribute substantially in the making of a man's personality and thought-patterns. Hence the inner development of Sri Aurobindo should be understood in relation to his period and the socio-political background of India of those days. We have seen, Sri Aurobindo passed early years of his life in the free atmosphere of

1. Iqbal's choice of Islam was also for the similar reasons. Thus he remarks : "The humanitarian ideal is always universal in poetry and philosophy, but if you make it an effective idea and work it out in actual life, you must start, not with poets and philosophers, but with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline....."

— A.A.Beg : The Poet of the East, pp. 316-17.

2. A.B.Purani : The Life of Sri Aurobindo, p. 199.

England. He had breathed in the air of freedom and had imbibed in his character and personality the love of freedom. When he came back to India, he found India under the Yoke of the British rule.

Political subjugation brings with it a host of evils in the life of a nation. Besides economic back-wardness, poverty, illiteracy and other such evils, there is a more serious loss — the loss of self-respect and self-confidence and the lack of initiative and originality. It leads to the philosophy of inaction and fatalism in life. The slave nation, in order to rationalise and justify its want of courage, takes shelter behind the idea of fate or in a distorted scale of values. In short, political subjugation leads to a general moral degeneration and intellectual bankruptcy so far as the general level of the national life is concerned.

However, the two marked tendencies of these periods of decadence are conservatism and resistance to any new awakening. The people go on blindly sticking to the past values and traditions (which no longer serve them) regardless of the changed circumstances and the new requirements. Moreover, the champions of the renaissance are termed as heretics and any attempt at reawakening and renovation is opposed tooth and nail. Thus Sri Aurobindo wrote about the conservatism of his countrymen saying that if an ancient Indian of

the time of the Upanishad, of the Buddha, or the later classical age were to be set down in modern India, he would be amazed by the extent of the mental poverty, the immobility, the static repetition, the cessation of science, the long sterility of art and the comparative feebleness of the creative intuition.

But as a rule, these things cannot go on unchallenged for ever. Certain great personalities are born as a response to the challenge of the times of degeneration. They fight the evil forces and try to bring up the original character of their people. It will be fruitful to know something about these personalities of India who have helped towards the above cause of renaissance.

The British rulers in India tried their best to keep the people of India as illiterate and tried to make any attempt at awakening unsuccessful. For a long time, the spread of English education was resisted by the Britishers. But they needed certain low-grade personnel out of Indians to run the government machinery in India. For this purpose, English education became imperative. But when, however, the intelligentsia of India came to know, through English education, the western ways of life and their institutions such as positivistic outlook towards the world, freedom, democracy and patriotism, they soon realised their own backwardness. Thus the

spread of English education indirectly led to the awakening of the national consciousness both among Hindus and Muslims.¹

Consequently several social reformation movements were started in India in the nineteenth century. The reformers of this period stressed the need of acquiring English education. Notable among these early pioneers of Indian renaissance are Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772-1833) and Keshab Chandra Sen (1838-1884). These reformers had understood that the main cause of moral degeneration in India lay in the adoption of eastern values in an adulterated form. Hence these reformers started reforming the society through the presentation of the cultural values in their pristine glory. Moreover, they tried to incorporate certain new values which they had imbibed through western institutions. It was in this spirit that Raja Ram Mohan Roy started Brahmo Sabha in 1828. This movement was farther carried on by Keshab Chandra Sen and Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, under the new name of Brahmo Samaj.

But these reformers were primarily theistic reformers. They did not go very deep into the original sources of Indian culture on intellectual level. Their main concern was to

1. "Sources of Indian Traditions", edited by Debary, W.M.Theodore (Columbia University Press, 1958), p.661.

discard all that was against progress and modernisation, in Hinduism. In 1875, Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824-1883) founded Arya Samaj which was, according to Dr. Karan Singh, "a true Hindu Protestant Reformation."¹ It tried to undo all the by-products and interpolations in the Vedas. It also strove to defend Hindu religion and philosophy from attacks of the outsiders.² This movement stood also for untouchability, equal rights for women and removal of idolatory and all caste-distinctions. This movement helped a great deal in awakening Hindu nationalism and in fact as de Reincoirt says, it was "the first real concrete nucleus of political nationalism."³

But these movements had an appeal mostly to the educated class. It was left to the genius of Sri Rama Krishna Parmhans (1834-1886) and Swami Vivekananda (1868-1902) to arouse a sense of pride in Indian culture in the general public. As Swami Vivekananda was himself an educated man, his teachings attracted educated class also. Hence those educated Hindus who, due to the spell of western influence, had started looking disdainfully over their culture, now

1. Karan Singh. The Prophet of Indian Nationalism, p.30.

2. R.R.Diwakar : Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo, (Bombay, 1962), p.11.

3. De Reincoirt : The Soul of India, (Newyork, 1960), p.236.

began to realise the greatness and glory of their cultural heritage. Shri Ramakrishna's simplicity and catholicity of his views was particularly appealing to the people. On the testimony of his own personal experience, he emphasised that the fundamental truths of all religions are the same.¹ Swami Vivekananda proved to be a worthy disciple of Shri Ramakrishna. He had received English education and was a great intellectual. He had addressed the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 and showed to the world that India is a land of spiritual wealth and that by virtue of her rich heritage she could well be the leader of the humanity in that field. He also made a tour of the West and Japan. Swamiji professed, consistent with his ideal of spirituality, the need of living a vigorous and active life regardless of the fear even if it be of death. He stood for the regeneration of spirituality in India through its reconstruction in the light of changed conditions and requirements of the modern scientific world.² He also pleaded for the synthesis of the East and the West.

In this way we can clearly see that by the time Sri Aurobindo stepped into Indian scene after his return from England, the renaissance in India was in full swing. These movements and their leaders seem to have contributed a lot

1. Mahendra Nath Gupta : The Gospel of Ramakrishna, II, 17.

2. Karan Singh : Prophet of Indian Nationalism, p. 36.

to the shaping of Sri Aurobindo's thought. According to R.R.Diwakar, it was from Shri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda that "Aurobindo received his first glimpse of spirituality and of the great message of India."¹ But Sri Aurobindo's approach was on a deeper intellectual level. His western education and training was of special advantage in the presentation of Indian culture before the world. Yet, as R.R.Diwakar says, Sri Aurobindo resembles Ramakrishna in love of spirituality and synthetic attitude towards all religions.² Sri Aurobindo's resemblance with Swami Vivekananda is also very significant. Both of them had received English education. Both of them had realised the need of a synthetic approach in religion and philosophy. Both stressed the need of re-interpretation of the old Indian cultural heritage. Both adopted a positivistic attitude towards the world and regarded the world as real not the fiction of our minds. In fact, as Professor Sisir Kumar Mitra says, there is a spiritual affinity between Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo.³

The two great personalities of Bengal, Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-1894) and Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) also seem to have influenced Sri Aurobindo. According to Sri

1. R.R.Diwakar : Mahayogi, p. 53.

2. Ibid., (1962 Edition), p. 12.

3. The Hindustan Times (13th Jan., 1963) Prof. Sisir Kumar Mitra: Swami Vivekananda and Awakened India, Pt.I.

Aurobindo, both of them contributed a great deal to the cause of awakening the nation.¹

There were others who were primarily concerned with the political emancipation of India from foreign rule. A few of them may be mentioned here as Gopal Krishna Gokhale (1866-1915), Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), C.R.Das (1870-1925), Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928), Motilal Nehru (1861-1931), Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948), Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) and others. In 1885 Indian National Congress was founded. Sri Aurobindo had observed this renaissance and he had seen in it the seeds of a spiritual awakening² because he had considered political freedom as essential for spiritual regeneration. We have seen the role played by Sri Aurobindo in this field.

We have made a general survey of the renaissance which had started with the mission of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and which, in the words of Professor Sisir Kumar Mitra, found its consummation in Sri Aurobindo.³ In 1947 India won her independence. Sri Aurobindo was very happy on this occasion. He had devoted himself after leaving active politics largely to the work of reconstruction of the Vedānta in view of new

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, p. 56.

2. Ibid., pp. 48-49.

3. The Hindustan Times (February 21, 1965) Sisir Kumar Mitra: Awakened India, II.

lights which he had received through western training. He presented a **dynamic** interpretation of the Vedānta. His view of life synthesises the practice of spirituality and the active participation in the affairs of the world. He had also strived to defend the Indian culture from the attacks of the western critics.

(iii) Sri Aurobindo as a Poet and Writer:

The relation of philosophy and poetry has been very close. Many a philosopher has expressed his philosophical views in the form of poetry as is the case with Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. There are other philosophers also like Jalāluddīn Rūmī, Fariduddīn Attār, Jāmī and Tagore who have adopted poetry as a medium of expressing their philosophical views. As a matter of fact, philosophy is the search after the ultimate Reality. Poetry too, in its highest form, aims at the same ideal. But the method of philosophy in this approach is logical and rational and poetry's approach is emotional and intuitive. As oriental philosophy has often laid stress on intuition, the oriental philosophers, in particular, have adopted the medium of poetry.

Sri Aurobindo had started composing poems from an early age. His magnum opus in poetry is "Savitri", an epic in English. This poem reflects Sri Aurobindo's views on

life and victory over death. The theme has been chosen from the mythological story of Sāvitṛī and her husband Satyavān. The poem "Love and Death" expressed a somewhat similar theme of conquering death. "Collected Poems and Plays" also contains some poems which express Sri Aurobindo's views regarding active life and its synthesis with spirituality. The poems, "In the Moonlight", "Beyond The Silence", "The Bird of Fire", "Rose of God", "The Rakshasas", "Jivanmukta" and "The Life Heavens" are of particular interest as they give us his views on the ideal of human life. His "Last Poems" also contains philosophical poems such as "Evolution", and the "Inconscient".

Sri Aurobindo was a prolific writer. His writings include a variety of subject — translations and commentaries on the ancient scriptures, philosophy, yoga, politics, nationalism, world-affairs and literature. His master-piece philosophical work is "The Life Divine". The main philosophical position of Sri Aurobindo incorporating the criticism of the rival points of view, has been given in this book. "The Synthesis of Yoga" covers the practical applications of his philosophy and indicates the way in which his concept of ideal of human life can be realised in life. He has synthesised the three yogic disciplines — भक्ति-योग (the yoga of devotion), ज्ञान-योग (yoga of knowledge) and कर्म-योग (yoga of actions) into one integrated system of yoga. "Essays

on the Gita" contains Sri Aurobindo's own interpretation and reconstruction of the old teachings of the Gita in the light of new requirements. He starts in this book with the presumption that "Only those Scriptures, religions, philosophies which can be thus constantly renewed, relived, their stuff of permanent truth constantly reshaped and developed in the inner thought and spiritual experience of a developing humanity, continue to be of living importance to mankind. The rest remain as monuments of the past, but have no actual force or vital impulse for the future."¹ His "Ideal of Human Unity", as the very name suggests, endeavours to establish the validity of this concept. In this connection he has also discussed some international organisations which are trying to realise this ideal in the world. "The Human Cycle" previously titled as "The Psychology of Social Development" deals with the subject of growth, flourishing and decline of civilizations and societies. "The Foundations of Indian Culture" is a defence of Indian culture from the attacks of western critics. It is a fine elucidation, of the Indian cultural heritage. He has placed the Indian culture before us in a polished and rejuvenated form washing it off the dirt of the times of decadence. "Sri Aurobindo on Himself and on the Mother" contains biographical notes by Sri

1. Essays on the Gita, pp. 4-5.

Aurobindo about himself and the Mother. He wrote these notes to remove some misunderstandings and correct erroneous references about his life made by certain writers. He has written these notes in third person in order to avoid direct personal reference. Besides these books, he has written many others the names of which we omit to mention due to limited space. While in Pondicherry, many letters poured in asking Sri Aurobindo questions about spiritualism and practical yoga. He replied to these letters very laboriously. These letters contain a wealth of spiritual wisdom. Hence they have been now published in book-forms.

We close our discussion here about Sri Aurobindo's life and his period. Now we take up the discussion on Dr. Iqbal's life.

B. THE LIFE OF DR. MOHD. IQBAL

Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal was born in Sialkot, Punjab. Some previous writers have generally given 22nd February, 1873 as the date of birth of Iqbal.¹ But recently S.A. Wahid and Faqir Syed Wahiduddin have shown with good reasons that Iqbal was born on 9th November, 1877.² Iqbal descended from

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1. S.A. Wahid : Iqbal, His Art and Thought (London, 1959) p.3. and A. Anwar Beg : The Poet of the East (Lahore, 1956), p.4.
 2. Iqbal Review, Karachi, October, 1964, S.A. Wahid: Date of Iqbal's Birth, pp.23,27. and Faqir Syed Wahiduddin: Rozgar-e-Faqir (Urdu), Karachi, 1965, p. 237.

a family of Kashmiri Brahmins. Early in the 18th century, one of his ancestors had embraced Islam. In fact, Iqbal was proud of this ancestry.¹ His father, Sheikh Noor Mohammad, though not an educated man, was fond of the company of religious men particularly the mystics. Hence he was well-versed in religious matters and mysticism. Iqbal's mother was also very pious and religious minded lady. It was due to her advice that Iqbal's father had resigned from a service as his employer was not having a right and lawful livelihood.

From his early age, Iqbal showed the signs of extraordinary intelligence. By nature he was sobre. After finishing his elementary education, he studied in a convent school for some time. There is an interesting episode of this period which throws light on the sharpness of his mind. Iqbal was then eleven or twelve years of age. One day he was late. His teacher asked him reason for his being late. At this young Iqbal replied briskly, "Iqbal² always comes late." Such a witty answer at such an early age impressed his teacher very much.

1. Ibid., p. 4.

2. There is a ^{on} pun / the word "Iqbal". Besides being used as a proper name, it literally means glory or splendour.

Maulana Syed Mir Hassan, who also happened to be a close friend of Iqbal's father, was the teacher of Iqbal during his early education. He was a learned man and was well-grounded in oriental wisdom. He had an insight ~~a~~ into the future greatness of his pupil, Iqbal. It was he who advised Iqbal's father to send Iqbal to read in an English school rather than in a mosque.

Iqbal passed his matriculation examination in 1893 and joined the Scotch Mission College, Sialkot. Here he studied for two years and passed his Intermediate examination of the Punjab University in 1895. After this he came to Lahore and joined Government College. Here he came in contact with Professor Thomas Arnold who made him interested in western knowledge and wisdom. In 1897, he passed his B.A. examination and in 1899 he took his Master's Degree in Philosophy. During the course of his university career, he won several gold and silver medals and scholarships for distinguishing himself in the various examinations.

After Iqbal had taken his M.A. degree, he was appointed McLeod Arabic Reader in the Punjab University Oriental College, Lahore where he lectured on History and Political Economy for about three years. Later on, he became Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Lahore Government College. He was a very impressive teacher and succeeded in creating real love of knowledge among his students.

In 1905, Iqbal took leave from his college and went to Europe for three years to pursue higher studies. He took admission in Trinity College, Cambridge. He learned philosophy under Professor MacTaggart and Professor Thomas Arnold. He came in contact also with Professor Brown and Professor R.A. Nicholson. Professor Arnold was very much impressed by Iqbal's scholarship and held him in great esteem.

Iqbal took his post-graduate degree in Philosophy from Cambridge University. Then he went to Germany for further studies. He submitted his thesis on "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia" to the Munich University and was awarded the Ph.D. degree.

While in England, Iqbal had passed Bar-at-Law examination also. He spent three years in Europe. He had been officiating Professor of Arabic in London for six months. He also delivered a series of lectures in London. His lecture delivered in Caxton Hall was published by leading papers in England. In 1908, Iqbal returned back to India.

On his return to India in August, 1908, he was appointed a part-time Professor of Philosophy and English in Government College, Lahore. He was permitted by the College authorities to practise law side by side with his teaching assignment. After some time he resigned from the

Professorship and totally depended on legal practice. It has been reported by his trusted servant, Ali Bakhsh that Iqbal had told him on resigning the post that he had a message for his people and that message could not be delivered freely to the people if he remained in Government service.¹

Iqbal had a lively interest in politics. He considered political freedom as essential for man's spiritual development. He regarded a slave nation as devoid of insight and true knowledge.² In 1927, he was elected as a member of Punjab Legislative Assembly. In 1928, he went to Madras at the invitation of the Madras Muslim Association. He delivered a series of lectures at Madras, Hyderabad, Mysore and Aligarh. These lectures have been published under the title "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam." In 1930, he presided over the annual session of All India Muslim League at Allahabad.³ In 1931-32, he again went to

1. S.A.Vahid : Iqbal, his Art and Thought, p. 22.

2. Thus we read in his 'Bāl-e-Jibrīl':

بھروسہ کرتے ہیں سکتے غلاموں کی بصیرت پر
کہ دنیا میں فقط مردانِ حر کی آنکھ ہے بینا

(We cannot rely upon the insight of the slaves. Because in the world, it is only the eye of free man that sees).

3. It is on the basis of the presidential address which he delivered at this session that Iqbal has been held

England to participate in the Round Table Conference. He also visited Paris where he met the French Philosopher, Henry Bergson. Both exchanged their philosophical views with each other. Henry Bergson was very much delighted when Iqbal narrated to him the famous saying of the Prophet of Islam, "Do not vilify Time because Time is God." On his way home, Iqbal also dropped at Spain and paid visit to some historical monuments like the Mosque of Cordova and Al-Hamra palace which reminded him of the past glory of Muslims in Spain. Some of his most sublime poems relate to his experience during this visit.

Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal died on 21st April, 1938. Many great men sent messages paying tribute to his greatness. We may be allowed to quote one by Rabindranath Tagore as it is a tribute from a great Indian Philosopher to another:

(Continued from previous page)

responsible for the creation of Pakistan. But the fact is that he did not envisage a separate, independent and sovereign state like the Present Pakistan. In fact, he stood for the formation of certain Muslim majority states "within the body-politic of India." He had envisaged India as one and united in matters of foreign policy, defence, etc., as he had said, "The North-West Indian Muslims will prove the best defenders of India against a foreign invasion...."

The following words from the same address also reveal Iqbal's deep love for India. He says: "The political bondage of India has been and is a source of infinite misery to the whole of Asia. It has suppressed the spirit of the East and wholly deprived her of that joy of self-expression which once made her the creator of a great and glorious culture. We have a duty towards India where we are destined to live and die."

— Shamloo: Speeches and Statements of Iqbal
p. 13 and pp. 34-35.

"The death of Sir Mohammad Iqbal creates a void in literature that like a mortal wound will take a very long time to heal. India whose place in the world is too narrow, can ill afford to miss a poet whose poetry had such universal value."¹

(i) Inner Development of Iqbal:

In tracing the inner development of Iqbal, it is necessary to consider the early influences of his immediate environment that contributed largely to the shaping of his personality and character. We know, Iqbal had opened his eyes in a religious atmosphere. His mother was so religious that she had persuaded her husband to leave a certain service and take up some private business because there was doubt about the rightfulness of the earning of the employer. Similarly, his father had advised him to try to feel while reciting the Holy Quran that the Almighty God was talking to him and, secondly, to try to carry His Message to the humanity. In the same way, Iqbal's first teacher, Syed Mir Hassan, who was a man of great learning and noble character, introduced Iqbal to the wealth of oriental wisdom. Through the study of the Persian language, Young Iqbal became acquainted with the thought of Persian mystic-poets such as Jalāl-ud-Dīn Rūmī, Attār and others. As a poet, he had got

1. S.A.Vahid : Iqbal, His Art and Thought, p. 35.

a very sensitive and imaginative mind. The marked tendencies of this phase of Iqbal's life may be described as those of pantheism and Nationalism. It was due to the early influences upon him that religion and spiritualism, particularly mysticism, aroused his interests. His poetic nature also predisposed him towards the same direction. He saw the manifestation of God in everything. His extensive studies in eastern and western literature developed in him a humanitarian outlook. He was pained at heart to see his countrymen undergoing foreign domination. He strove to unite Hindus and Muslims to fight the British empirialism. This is the period in which Iqbal became known all over India as a nationalistic poet. His fine lyrical poems in Urdu saturated with patriotism touched the heart of every Indian.

It is also remarkable here that Iqbal wanted to unveil the reality behind the visible world. There was a restlessness to understand the enigma of death and life. However, his interests were not individualistic but collective. He was in search of a solution of these problems for the whole humanity. He wanted to know the aim, the purpose of the world and life. In other words, he was in search of an 'Ideal' of human life which could be a solace to the whole humanity.

The second phase of Iqbal's life begins with his visit to the West. Now he began to feel dissatisfaction with the concept of nationalism. He realised that this concept was a device of the imperialists to keep the nations divided, weak and subdued. However, his patriotism and humanism demanded a vigorous fight against western imperialists. For this purpose, human equality and brotherhood were very essential. Iqbal's patriotism led to the denunciation of the nationalism and replacement of it by the concept of human brotherhood. He considered nationalism a great hinderance in the way of universal brotherhood of man. At this stage he felt a great fascination for Islam which stood for human brotherhood.

It was also during this visit of Iqbal to the West that he came in contact with western civilization and culture. He found that materialism and atheism were at the basis of western life and culture. Particularly, the western politics was, in his view, divorced from religion. As materialism and atheism, according to Iqbal, cannot provide a stable basis for life and society — it is in the very nature of materialism that it leads to class-conflicts and intergroup-frictions — Iqbal believed that western society contained

the seeds of self-destruction.¹ He was not affected in the least by the glitter and glamour of western society. He always loved simple living. However, he appreciated certain bright aspects of western culture, e.g., an empirical attitude towards the world, the concern for improving the conditions of the mundane existence and scientific zeal. He thought that this attitude was largely responsible for the ascendancy of the West over the East. In short, in the second phase of his development, Iqbal had become dissatisfied with narrow nationalism and accepted the ideal of human brotherhood as preached by Islam. It is wrong to suppose that this phase of his life marked an absolute negation of his earlier trends of patriotism and love of his countrymen. It was rather a development of the old trends in a new directions and marked a widening of his outlook. He still loved his country but he aspired not for the freedom of India

1. In his "Bāng-e-Darā", Iqbal says:

دیار مغرب کے رہنے والو خدا کی بستی دکان نہیں ہے
 کھرا جسے تم سمجھ رہے ہو وہ اب زر کم عیار ہوگا
 تمہاری تہذیب اپنے خنجر سے آپ ہی خود کشی کریگی
 جو شاخ نازک پہ آشیانہ بنے گا ناپائدار ہوگا

— Kulliyāt-e-Iqbāl, p. 119.

(O, dwellers of western lands, God's world is not a shop. That which you consider to be gold coin, shall prove to be of low value. Your civilization will commit suicide with its own dagger. A nest which is built on a tender branch cannot last).

alone from British yoke but for the freedom and awakening of all the nations of Asia which were under the dominations of the west.

In this stage of Iqbal's development, we find, he had arrived at the solution of the political problems of the East, but a consistent philosophical basis of his message was as yet lacking. As a philosopher, he had not found as yet answers to all his queries and doubts. He wanted a comprehensive philosophy which should co-ordinate all the elements of his message and should ^{as} serve a vantage ground from which all problems about life could be solved.

Gradually, he succeeds in developing such a philosophy and discovers a philosophical terminology for conveying his message for the political and spiritual emancipation of all the nations of the East, nay, of all the humanity. In this philosophy, he has taken help from mysticism and the fundamental doctrines of Islam. But his mysticism is dynamic and he gives a re-interpretation of Islam freeing it from all the interpolations and misconceptions of the past. This is the third stage of Iqbal's development which may be described as the stage of firm beliefs and well-founded convictions marked by a philosophical depth. In this phase of life, Iqbal had achieved the maturity of thoughts; his philosophical quest had reached its goal. About his

choice of Islam as a key to the solutions of the problems of humanity, it may be said that he adopted Islam on sound pragmatic grounds as he himself has made this point clear in a letter to R.A. Nicholson replying to the charge of Dickinson that while his (Iqbal's) philosophy is universal his application of it is particular and exclusive. Thus Iqbal writes : "This is in a sense true. The humanitarian ideal is always universal in poetry and philosophy, but if you make it an effective ideal and work it out in actual life, you must start, not with poets and philosophers, but with a society exclusive in the sense of having a creed and well-defined outline, but ever enlarging its limits by example and persuasion. Such a society, according to my belief, is Islam. This society has so far proved itself a more successful opponent of the race-idea which is probably the hardest barrier in the way of the humanitarian ideal..... While I have the greatest love for Islam, it is in view of practical and not patriotic considerations, as Mr. Dickinson thinks, that I am compelled to start with a specific society (e.g. Islam) which, among the societies of the world, happens to be the only one suitable to my purpose. Nor is the spirit of Islam so exclusive as Mr. Dickinson thinks. In the interest of a universal unification of mankind the Quran ignores their minor differences and says, 'Come, let us unite on what is common to us all'.¹"

1. A.Anwar Beg : The Poet of the East, pp. 316-17.

In his earlier career, Iqbal had been a pantheist. But now he realises that the doctrine of the self-negation upheld by certain class of pantheists (sufies) is largely responsible for the backwardness of the East and its political subjugation. He took up the work of the refutation of those implications of pantheism which tended to engender an attitude of renunciation towards the world. He strove to synthesise spirituality with the active participations in the affairs of the world. It was in this spirit that Iqbal wrote "Asrār-e-Khudī" and "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī". Through these two persian Masnavis, he upheld the doctrine of self-affirmation and presented his concept of dynamic spirituality. About this change in Iqbal's mind regarding Pantheism, Professor MacTaggart, in his letter to Iqbal, has also referred to this change in his mind.¹ He writes: "I am writing to tell you with how much pleasure I have been reading your poems. Have you not changed your position very much? Surely in the days when we used to talk philosophy together, you were much more of a pantheist and mystic."²

Iqbal also found out that the doctrine of determinism or fatalism preached by certain religions and philosophical

1. This letter was written after the publication of Iqbal's Persian Masnavi "Asrar-e-Khudi" in the refutation of certain trends of pantheism.

2. A. Anwar Beg : The Poet of the East, p. 306.

systems was also responsible for the loss of active interest in life. The people had fallen a prey to inaction and passivity and had no enthusiasm for improving the life-conditions. Iqbal came to the conclusion that the religion also stood in urgent need of re-interpretation and reconstruction. According to him, a true philosophy or religion does not teach us fatalism or renunciation. It seems so because certain vested interests have misinterpreted religion. Moreover, he was convinced that a true religion should possess the dynamic quality of ever adjusting itself to the changing circumstances and new requirements.

Thus we see, how after his return from the West, Iqbal's mind was working in new directions. Now his newly formed ideas had begun to take definite and firm shape. Now he criticised Western imperialism as its foundation lay in the usurping of the freedom of other nations. And in the face of the threat from Western imperialism, he refutes the concept of nationalism. He appreciates communism as it frees men from territorial nationalism. But he criticises it as it is founded on material equality (equality of bellies, as he calls it in his poems)¹ instead of spiritual equality and thus lacks real brotherhood and humanity.

1. About the Socialism of Karl Marx, Iqbal says in his 'Jawed Namah', p. 69:

دین آن پیغمبر حق ناشناس * بر مساوات شکم دارد اساس
(The religion of this Prophet, ignorant of God, has got the basis in the equality of the bellies).

So we find, by this time Iqbal had got definite ideas and formed a definite line of ~~future~~ action before him. It was time to impliment those ideas. The first necessity was that of freeing India from foreign domination. Political freedom was the first essential condition for any regeneration, whether spiritual or temporal. Secondly, the spirituality which people had come to adopt was largely based on misinterpretation. Hence, it ~~was~~ thought imperative to reinterpret it afresh. Thirdly, it was also felt that a spiritual and cultural heritage howsoever sound and vital in the past, has no living force for the present unless it possessed the quality of changing itself according to the needs of changing circumstances. The country needed a complete renaissance. We have seen the renaissance among the Hindus while dealing with the inner development of Sri Aurobindo in the previous sections. Let us now see, in brief, the renaissance among the Muslims as it will help us understand the inner development of Iqbal and the significance of his own role in this work of awakening.

The renaissance among Muslims dates as far back as the mission of Shah Waliullah (1703-1763) of Delhi. He felt that Islam in the modern age was in great need of reformation and re-interpretation. Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898) made the betterment of the Muslims' conditions his life-mission.

As the Muslims were everywhere suspected by the present rulers, Sir Syed's foremost mission consisted of winning the favour of the British-rulers by proving Muslims their faithful subjects. He was also convinced that to bring the Muslims out of their present plight, adoption of English education was essential. Consequently in 1886, he and some of his associates such as Chiragh Ali, Maulavi Nazir Ahmad, Altaf Hussain Hali and Maulavi Zakaullah founded the Mohammadan Educational Conference at Aligarh. All of them, says B.A. Dar, "rendered great service to the cause of Islam."¹ Sir Syed Ahmad Khan did not want Muslims to take part in politics.² The main function of Aligarh Movement started by Sir Syed was to spread English education and to defend Islam against external criticism.³

In 1906, All India Muslim League was founded. As Islam does not recognise the barriers and distinctions of race, caste, colour or country, the Muslims of India had also some interest in the affairs of the Muslims of other countries. They were feeling a close emotional attachment with Turkey as her sultanate was threatened by the Western power.

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1. B.A.Dar : Religious Thought of Sayyid Ahmed Khan, p. 58.
 2. "Stray Reflections" Int. by Jawid Iqbal, p. xv.
 3. W.C.Smith : Modern Islam in India, p. 16.

So far Turkey was the only Muslim power which was free. The concept of Pan-Islamism propagated by Sultan Abdul Hamid and Jamal-al-Din Afghani was very appealing to the younger generation of Muslims.

In 1882, Syed Jamal-al-Din Afghani came to India to register support for his concept of Pan-Islamism. When in 1911, Italy engaged Turkey in the Tripoli war and later during the Balkan Wars of 1912-13, many Indian Muslims sympathised with Turkey and they began to develop a sense of resentment against European imperialism and became ultimately anti-British. Iqbal belonged to this class of the Muslims. Jamal-al-Din Afghani's vision of the solidarity of Islamic people had influenced Iqbal profoundly.¹ But the feudal class which formed the Muslim League still pursued the policy of the appeasement of the British rulers. Hence Iqbal had no sympathy with them. He strove for the emancipation of India from the British through his inspiring poetry. Islamic society also stood in great need of reform. Islam was a religion whose fundamental principles were formulated about thirteen hundred years ago. Being separated from its original source, it had assimilated many influences

1. "Stray Reflection", Int. by Jawid Iqbal, p. xvii.

from various quarters; so Islamic society had lost its original character. Moreover, it is obvious, nothing is static in this world. Life and society are also changing. With the change of circumstances, old norms and standards need re-interpretation to suit the new requirements. This task of re-interpretation and reconstructions could be satisfactorily performed by one who was well-versed in Islamic learning on the one hand, and had a clear awareness of the modern trends, on the other. Iqbal satisfied these conditions and so applied himself to the reconstruction of the Islamic thought and reform of the Islamic society through his poetry and prose writings. He was very much critical of those pseudo-mystics who through their philosophical doctrines lulled the people to slumber deserting the field of active life. He gave a fiery message of action to the sleeping masses. About the role of Iqbal in this connection, W.C. Smith says : "Such a refashioning was a service rendered to Islam chiefly by the outstanding Muslim poet and thinker of the century, Mohammad Iqbal¹."

This brief study of Iqbal's inner development will be incomplete without mentioning some important personalities who influenced Iqbal. The thought of the famous Persian

1. W.C. Smith : Modern Islam in India, p. 110.

mystic poet, Jalal-al-Din Rumi (1207-1273 A.D.) has greatly influenced Iqbal. Iqbal himself repeatedly acknowledges his indebtedness to Rumi so much so that he regards Rumi as his spiritual guide. He was also deeply influenced by Mujaddid-e-Alf-e-Sani, Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (971-1034 A.H.) who has tried to offer reconciliation between mysticism and the canon law of Islam. Iqbal mentions his name with great respect and regards him as one of the greatest reformers of Islam. Iqbal was also fully conversant with the thought of two great western philosophers — Henry Bergson and Nietzsche. There is much common among their philosophical views. However, at times, Iqbal seems to be differing from their position and even criticising pointedly. Beside the above-mentioned personalities, Iqbal himself has admitted the influence upon him of Hegel, Goethe, Mirza Ghalib, Mirza Abdul Qadir Bedil and Wordsworth. About them Iqbal says, "The first two led me into the 'inside' of things; the third and forth taught me how to remain Oriental in spirit and expression after having assimilated foreign ideas of poetry, and the last saved me from atheism in my student days."¹

Here is an episode which illustrates Iqbal's philosophical views regarding self-affirmation as against the doctrine of self-annihilation. Once a Darwesh (saint) came

1. "Stray Reflection", p. 54.



to meet him. Iqbal asked him to pray for him. At this the Darwesh enquired if he wanted riches and fame. Iqbal replied in the negative. Then the Faqir asked if he wanted to meet God. At this Iqbal said that if he knew that God is coming to meet him, he would run away from Him as fast as he could. He explained the reason of it thus,"..... if the river meets the drop, the latter will vanish. I want to preserve my entity as a drop and do not want to efface myself. While at the same time maintaining my position as a drop, I want to create in myself the properties of a river.¹"

(ii) Iqbal as a Poet and Writer:

Iqbal began his career as a poet as early as his school-days. In the beginning he wrote in Punjabi and later on in Urdu. He used to send his poems for correction to the famous Urdu poet, Dagh. But he very soon realised that Iqbal was an inspired poet and that his poems did not

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1. A.Anwar Beg : The Poet of the East, p.68. It is interesting to find a similar reference in Rabindranath Tagore. He says: "I know thee as my God and stand apart — I do not know thee as my own and come closer I stand not where thou comest down and ownest thyself as mine, there to elasp thee to my heart and take thee as my comrade In pleasure and in pain I stand not by the side of men, and thus stand by thee. I shrink to give up my life, and thus do not plunge into the great waters of life."

— Gitanjali (New York, 1952) pp. 71-72.



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stand in need of correction. Iqbal was pained to see India in political bondage. He stirred up the whole nation to strive for the freedom of the motherland through his inspiring lyrical Urdu poems.

After his return from Europe, Iqbal adopted Persian poetry as vehicle of his thought so that he may convey his message to a larger audience. Most of his works are in the form of Urdu and Persian poetry. He chose poetry as the medium of his philosophical thoughts because it has a greater appeal to the heart.

As we have already mentioned, Iqbal's first philosophical work in prose which was published in London 1908, was "The Development of Metaphysics in Persia". This book established Iqbal's reputation in the learned scholars of his time. The series of lectures which he had delivered at Madras, Hyderabad and Aligarh was also published in book-form under the title : "The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam." These two are the only philosophical works of Iqbal in prose. His speeches and statements have been edited by Shamloo. Iqbal's son, Dr. Jawed Iqbal has also edited a sort of diary of Iqbal which was named by Iqbal himself as "Stray Reflections".

In 1915, Iqbal's first Persian book "Asrāre-e-Khudi" (The Secrets of the Self), a Masnavi, appeared. In this

Masnavī, he upheld the existence and reality of the individual selves. It throws light on their true relationship with the Supreme Self, God. The next publication was "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī" (Mysteries of Selflessness) in 1917. This is also a Persian Masnavī and it illustrates the organic relationship between the individual and the society. These two Persian Masnavīs, read together, give us the complete 'ideal' of human life as upheld by Iqbal.

In 1922, "Bāng-e-Darā" (The Bells of the Caravan), a collection of Urdu poems was published. Then appeared "Payām-e-Mashriq" (The Message of the East), a collection of Persian poems, which was written in response to Goethe's "Öst Westerliche Diwan". After it "Zabūr-e-Ajam" (The Psalms of the Persia) containing mystic hymns was published. In 1932, "Jāwed Nāmāh"¹ appeared before the public. This book has been regarded as Dr. Iqbal's magnum opus. It is also in Persian verse. In 1935-36, "Bāl-e-Jibrīl" (The wing of Gabriel) and "Zarb-e-Kalīm" (The stroke of Moses) were published. Both the books contain Urdu poems on different themes. In 1936, his another Persian Masnavī, "Pas chai Bāyad Kard Āi Aqwām-e-Sharq" (What should be done now, O Nations of the East) was published. "Armughān-e-Hijāz"

1. Shaikh Mahmud Ahmed has translated this book in English under the title "The Pilgrimage of Eternity", Lahore, 1961.

(Arabian Gift), a collection of Persian and Urdu poems, was published posthumously.

C. RECAPITULATION

By way of recapitulation, let us have a comparative look on the biographical facts of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. We have seen how the inner development and future mission of both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal were shaped and directed by their environment and socio-political conditions of the then India. We shall have occasions to see that there exists a great similarity between the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. However, it is here that it should be pointed out that there is also some similarity between the biographical facts of the two philosophers which may well furnish a rationale for the similarity in their views.

To start with, we have seen that both of our authors inherited a sort of religious or spiritual bias from their parents. It is true that in Sri Aurobindo's case this bias was not so marked and might have played its role only subconsciously. This may be due to his mother who happened to belong to a Brahmo Samaj family. But then both of them lived in India which was under British subjugation. India of their times was infested with the evils which accompany a foreign rule. Both of our authors were greatly affected by the prevailing conditions of their motherland. Both

Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal yearned for the emancipation of India from foreign rule and gave a message of active and vigorous life to the sleeping nation.

Both the philosophers had been to the West. Both were deeply influenced by the western institutions, e.g., liberty and scientific zeal for bettering the life in the world. Perhaps it was due to the influence of the West that action and progress were emphasised by them as constituents of their concepts of the 'Ideal' of human life.

Both of them stepped into India at a time when the renaissance had started taking its form. Many social reformative movements had already been started. The need of re-interpretation and reconstruction of the past cultural heritage was fully recognised both among Hindus and Muslims. It was for the fulfilment of this need that Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal took to writing. The work of reconstruction and re-interpretation done by these two philosophers has greatly been appreciated by the various scholars of the East and the West.

Thus we have seen the background of the thought of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Their works should be studied and evaluated in the light of the above facts. Their own roles in this frame of reference have been very important. That is why, they have been regarded as the prophets of the modern era. Their philosophies give us a message of hope and bright future.

C H A P T E R I I

SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE

The problem of the sources of knowledge or the methods of acquiring knowledge is very vital in philosophy. In fact, there is an intimate relationship between one's epistemological views and his actual philosophy that he constructs. This relationship is of somewhat a reciprocal kind. For, while it is true that the problem of methods is a main factor in determining the nature of a particular philosophy, it is also true that the nature and data of Reality presupposed for investigation determine the particular methods for acquiring knowledge of that field.¹ A thinker who postulates any reality beyond the physical world, must of necessity recognise the methods of knowledge other than sense-organs. Thus we can say that in acquiring knowledge, different kinds of subject-matter of knowledge require different kinds of methods for investigation. That is why the question of the methods of knowledge has been very vital and significant. Many philosophical movements are marked by an attempt at finding a suitable method for philosophy. This problem has assumed a great significance in modern philosophy as well.

1. Sri Aurobindo has, very aptly, said, "Our ways of knowing must be appropriate to that which is to be known."

— The Life Divine, I, p. 43.

In the history of western philosophy, different schools have laid exclusive emphasis on different methods. Therefore, their philosophies have become one-sided. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have presented a synthesis of these methods. But before dealing with their views on the sources of knowledge, it seems necessary to give the central idea of these sources so that in their context, it may become easy to understand the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal.

There are three sources or methods of knowledge which have generally been recognised. They are, sense-experience, Reason and Intuition. The school of Empiricism has held that all knowledge is derived from experience, that is, from sense-perception. This theory stands in sharp antagonism with Rationalism and denies the existence of innate ideas or 'a priori' truths. It emphasises that the part played by experience or sense-organs is important as against the part played by reason in acquiring knowledge. The theory in its extreme form denies the existence of ideas other than those which are derived from sense-experience. It regards these abstract ideas as only names (hence nominalism) devised to deal economically with the groups of particular objects. This theory also holds that the truth of ideas other than logical ones can be established only through experience. According to Empiricism, there is no sure

knowledge. Generalisations, which we draw after experiencing several cases of the same type, give us only more or less probable knowledge.

Rationalism assigns first place to reason as against sense-experience in the acquisition of valid knowledge. It is opposed to Empiricism. It is also opposed to accepting any knowledge as valid which is based on faith or religion. Human reason alone is competent to attain objective truth. Rationalism believes in innate ideas and regards them as materials of knowledge for further knowledge. According to this theory, necessary truths can be achieved by a process of logical deductive reasoning from certain self-evident axioms. Mathematical and geometrical axioms have, as a rule, been very inspiring to this theory. There are certain universal and necessary truths which are comprehended by our Reason directly. All the scientific laws are derived from these necessary truths by way of deductive reasoning. Certain geometrical concepts are also based on Reason. Experience can never prove these truth to be true or false. The concepts of parallel lines, straight lines, circles etc. are given to us a priori. Our experience has given us none of these concepts.

| The school of Intuitionism has maintained that the knowledge can be apprehended directly and immediately without

any help either from experience or from reason. Intuition is the only true source of knowledge. Intellect cannot know the fundamental truths. Intuition acquires knowledge directly without any recourse to inference or to reason. Ordinary procedures of inquiry are not required in intuitive knowledge. Intuition is a power of acquiring knowledge originally and independently. It acquires those kinds of knowledge in which sense and reason fail. Analysis is not the way of Intuition; it studies a thing as a whole. Our knowledge of God and moral principles is derived through intuitive faculty. Mystics have generally relied on this method. /

When we reflect upon these various methods of knowledge, we find that all of them do possess some elements of value in them but taken individually they present only partial views before us. None of these methods taken in isolation can satisfactorily account for all human knowledge. Empiricism, though essential for the study of external world, cannot by itself, give us systematic knowledge unless our Reason also works upon the sense-data. Similarly, though both the sense-experience and reason are essential, yet there may be certain vistas of knowledge where both of these fail. It is here that we need intuition as a source of knowledge. So there is a great disadvantage /ⁱⁿ depending on

any one single method of knowledge and depriving oneself of the possibility of acquiring comprehensive knowledge of the Reality. A synthesis of all the methods should be able to give us an integral view of the Reality.

There has been a common error of many philosophers to regard these methods as exclusive of one another. In this way extreme and often contradictory schools of thought have come into existence as a consequence of their exclusive preference for this or that method. Apart from their other contradictions and inconsistencies, the very fact of mutual exclusiveness of their methods renders them inadequate and incapable of giving a comprehensive picture of the Reality.

The choice of a particular method should correspond to the choice of field or object to be investigated. For example, if we have to study Mathematics or Geometry, we are bound to depend on 'a priori' principles of these sciences. Can experience tell us that two parallel lines never meet? No, it cannot. We will have to take it as necessary truth revealed to us by the reason. At the same time it should also be admitted that the tastes smells and colours of objects cannot be known 'a priori'; we have to take help of experience in this connection. Similarly only experience can tell us that bodies expand when heated. Thus sense-

experience or knowledge 'a posteriori' is also to be recognised as valid source of knowledge. In the same way some aspects of reality may be such that in order to obtain their knowledge, we may be compelled to depend on intuition exclusively. Thus we may conclude that for any comprehensive picture of reality, we will have to take help from all methods and approaches.

Now with this background, we suppose, it will be easier to understand the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal with regard to the methods of acquiring knowledge.

1. KNOWLEDGE THROUGH SENSE - EXPERIENCE

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have recognised the sense-experience as a valid, source of knowledge. The obvious means of acquiring empirical knowledge are our sense-organs. The sense-organs give us knowledge of the physical phenomena after coming into contact with the external world. This knowledge furnished by our sense-organs can have no meaning and validity unless we regard the external world itself as real. We know Plato who regarded the external world as unreal. That is why he gave no value to sense-experience.¹ Hence before we recognise

1. Iqbal has criticised Plato on this account.
—— The Reconstruction, pp. 3-4.

sense-experience as true knowledge, we should acknowledge the reality of the physical world. Both our authors regard the external physical world as real. According to Sri Aurobindo, this world is the real transformation of Brahman; there is no illusion here. Everything which this world contains is real.

Iqbal takes the help of Quranic verses in order to establish the reality of this world. According to him, the manifesting Reality reveals its symbols within the realm of spirits as well as in the external world.¹ He says that the Quran has laid great emphasis on the study of the observable aspect of Reality, i.e., physical world.² Iqbal further says that it was this empirical attitude of the Quran which had taught the Muslims to have concern for external world and thus made them the founders of modern sciences.³ As the ultimate Reality is revealing its signs in the external world, the empirical attitude has been regarded by the Quran as "an indispensable stage in the spiritual life of humanity."⁴ It is in this context that the Quran has regarded hearing and sight as the most valuable Divine gifts in man.⁵

1. The Reconstruction, p. 16.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. Ibid., p. 15.

4. Ibid., p. 15.

5. Ibid., p. 4.

However, Iqbal and Sri Aurobindo agree, that our sense-organs furnish us only with raw material of knowledge. In order that this material may be converted into systematised knowledge, it is to be worked upon by our understanding or Mind.¹ Sri Aurobindo says that the sense-experience has no meaning unless "it is translated into the terms of the sense-mind."² (or Manas). That is why 'Manas' has been regarded in Indian philosophy as the sixth sense. But Sri Aurobindo says that in fact it is the only sense as the sense-organs furnish us only with raw material. Similarly Iqbal holds that the observation of Nature i.e. external world, should be reflective so that it may be meaningful. Hence he defines knowledge as "sense-perception elaborated by understanding."³

Thus we see that the sense-experience in itself is inadequate to give us knowledge unless Reason corrects and modifies our perceptions. Sri Aurobindo greatly appreciates this function of Reason and says that the power of correcting the errors of sense-mind by the use of reason is uniquely possessed by man alone and thus marks his (man's) superiority over other terrestrial beings.⁴

1. The Reconstruction, p. 13.

2. The Life Divine, Vol.I, p. 94.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 13.

4. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), pp. 73-74.

There are five sense-organs in us leading to five sensations viz., visual, auditory, tactual, alfactory and gustatory. They give us knowledge of the physical phenomena after coming in contact with their respective stimuli. Sense-mind is the organiser of the impressions of the sense-organs. According to Sri Aurobindo, the sense-mind possesses double action : (1) Mixed or Dependent; and (2) Pure or Sovereign. To depend on the sense-organs for becoming aware of the external objects is the Mixed action of the Mind. In its sovereign action mind does not depend on sense-organs and becomes aware not of physical objects but of its own self.¹ Thus the perception of our emotions and of our own existence is obtained through sovereign action of our mind. According to Sri Aurobindo, this knowledge is the knowledge by identity. Intuition is also a knowledge through identity but the knowledge of sovereign Mind is only a lower form of Intuition.² He further says that it is possible, nay, it would be natural, for mind to work without the help of physical sense-organs.³ Not only this, he thinks, even new senses can be produced, e.g. the power of accurate appreciation of the weight of an object without physical means. It

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), pp. 74-75.

2. Thus Sri Aurobindo regards "Intuition" as "an extension of that form of knowledge by identity which gives us the awareness of our own existence." Ibid., p. 78.

3. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

is done taking the object in the hands and judging its weight. He says in so perceiving the weight, the sense of contact and pressure is only a starting-point.¹ Similarly the thoughts of others can be read without taking help from their utterances, gestures, and facial expressions.

But, says Sri Aurobindo, howsoever we perfect our senses and sense-mind, they fail when we begin to tread the regions of knowledge which can be studied only by the help of reason. He says, Gita also talks of such subject matter of knowledge. Thus it says that there are some truths which are "beyond perception by the sense but seizable by the perceptions of the reason."²

Thus we see that our senses enable us only to have an effective observations of phenomena. They are unable to obtain the truth of things. Hence we stand in need of some other means of knowledge beyond senses. This brings us to the discussion of second method of acquiring knowledge, that is, Reason.

1. Ibid., p. 76.

2. Gita, VI, 21: "बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम्"

2. KNOWLEDGE THROUGH REASON

The first means of true and exact knowledge regarding physical phenomena is the Reason. This faculty deduces the conclusions from the experiences of the facts of the physical world but which are not warranted by any physical sense or experience. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have acknowledged Reason as a valid source of knowledge. Sri Aurobindo says about the achievements of intellectual age that it has given us exact and accurate knowledge of the phenomena and has provided us with power and comfort. Not only this, it has strengthened man's idealism through establishing the reality of the external world and bringing out the inner and deeper truth of the phenomenal world.¹ Similarly Iqbal says that the intellectual knowledge prepares man for a more masterful insertion into the subtler aspects or experience.² Further in view of the importance of Reason, Iqbal has said that in fact religion needs rational foundation of its ultimate principles more than the science does. Science has ignored rational metaphysics but the religion cannot afford to do so. On religion is based the whole career of man. Hence the understanding of the world on the rational basis is very essential for religion. But while agreeing that religion needs a rational foundations, Iqbal

1. Sri Aurobindo : Evolution, pp. 32-33.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 15.

does not accept the superiority of philosophy over religion. For, the data of religion are different from those of philosophy. Hence they cannot be subjected to an absolute philosophical test.¹

Sri Aurobindo has analysed the function of Reason into two parts. He says that just like sense-mind, Reason also has got double action: (1) Mixed or Dependent, and (2) Pure or Sovereign. When the Reason deals with the physically visible world, it is said to be in its mixed or dependent action. Scientific knowledge is so derived by Reason. The Reason in its mixed or dependent action deals with the world of becoming but it is incapable of knowing the reality behind that becoming. The reality behind the appearances is known by Reason when it is in its pure action, i.e., when it is working independent of sense-experience. However, the pure Reason takes sense-experience as only a starting-point. "The complete use of pure reason" according to Sri Aurobindo² "brings us finally from physical to metaphysical knowledge."

The approach of the intellect or Reason is analytical in nature in so far as it divides into small manageable parts the object being known. It cannot study the reality as a

1. The Reconstruction, p. 2.

2. The Life Divine (Pondy., 1960), p. 74.

whole.¹ It does so with a view to facilitate scientific and controlled observation through experimentation. Consequently, the findings of the Intellect or Reason are well-ascertained and verifiable. It is by virtue of intellectual way that man has conquered Nature through scientific inventions and thus it has served the humanity in good stead. It is an undeniable fact that for the practical life in the world, the intellect is indispensable.

However, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are opposed to over-emphasis or sole reliance on Intellect. The West has laid greater emphasis on Intellect. This gave the West enormous worldly power on the one hand and brought relative poverty of spiritual values on the other. In most cases, it led to atheism. Sri Aurobindo remarks : "European metaphysical thought does not, in its method and result go beyond the intellect. But the intellect is incapable of knowing the supreme Truth At the end of European thought, therefore, there must always be Agnosticism, declared or implicit."² That is why the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal in a way represent a revolt against the surging tide of intellectualism. All the same, both criticise the East for subduing the intellectual activity which is

1. That is why Henri Bergson compared intellect with a cinemetograph which takes many static snap-shots of a moving object.

2. Sri Aurobindo : On Yoga, II, Tome I, p. 169.

responsible for the poverty of life in the East. Iqbal conveys the above truth in a Persian couplet which means that the East saw God but neglected the world; the West thrust itself into the world but ran away from God.¹ Hence the neglect of intellectual pursuit in the East was disastrous to the life in the world. Equally disastrous was exclusive over-emphasis upon intellect in the West. Because it produced there the poverty of spiritual attainments.

So far as the study of the physical world and its conquest is concerned, we have to take help of Intellect or Reason, but when we have to go beyond the mind and the reason and tread regions of God and spirit, Intellect cannot tell us anything about them. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo a true and sincere intellect should give the following report about higher and subtle realities : "I cannot know, there is, or at least it seems to me that there may be or even must be something beyond, some ultimate Reality, but about its truth I can only speculate; it is either unknowable or cannot be known by me."²

1. Here the following verse from "Jāwed Nāmāh" has been referred to:

شرق حق را دید و عالم را ندید * غرب در عالم خزید از حق رمید

2. Sri Aurobindo : "The Riddle of this World". pp. 23-24.

In this way we can see that the Intellect or Reason does not negate the existence of any higher reality; it is simply beyond its capabilities. It may, of course, make conjectures about them waveringly and hesitatingly but cannot affirm their existence with full confidence. That is why Iqbal has said in his "Rumūz-e-Bekhudī" that the characteristic of Intellect is fears and doubts while the Love or Intuition is inseparable from firm faith and resolution.¹ Similarly Sri Aurobindo says that the intellectual Reason is unable to furnish to us a sure judgment about the reality; it gives us conflicting views and can only point vaguely or feel gropingly towards it.²

This brings us to the discussion of Intuition as the source of knowledge for knowing the reality which is beyond sense-mind and reason.

3. INTUITION AS SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal firmly believe that the ultimate Reality is known only through Intuition. According to Sri Aurobindo, due to the nature of Intuition, this kind of intuitive knowledge has also come to be known as the "Knowledge by Identity."³ Because Intuition

1. عقل را سرمایه از بیم و شک است * عشق را عزم و یقین لا ینفک است

2. Sri Aurobindo : The Riddle of this World, p. 25.

3. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Pt. II, p. 555.

knowledge is to be attained only through feeling a sort of sympathy or identity with the object being known.¹ Thus describing the foundation of such knowledge Sri Aurobindo says that "the foundation of intuitional knowledge is conscious or effective identity between that which knows and that which is known; it is that state of common self-existence in which the knower and the known are one through knowledge."¹

Just in the same way, Iqbal regards the Intuition as a method of acquiring a close association with the reality being known.² He says that the intuitional knowledge is of the character of "a single unanalysable unity in which the ordinary distinction of subject and object does not exist."³

Neither Sri Aurobindo nor Iqbal is prepared to draw any strict demarkation-line between the Intuition and Reason. They bring the Intuition closer to everyday-experience — not something superhuman. Both of them affirm that the knowledge of our own selves is furnished to us by the method of intuition.⁴ But it is more of a mental character, exhibits

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), pp. 78-79.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 16.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 19.

4. Hence in his 'Payam-e-Mashriq', p.179, Iqbal says:

در بود و نبود من اندیشه گمان ها داشت

از عشق هویدا شد این نکته که هستم من

(The Intellect entertained many doubts as to whether I exist or not. By Intuition (Ishaq) this secret was revealed unto me that I do really exist). (It may be pointed out here that Love itself, according to Iqbal and also according to Rumi, is a form of Intuition).

itself more in effective activity than in pure knowledge and hence is only a lower grade of knowledge. The Intuition proper is, according to Sri Aurobindo, only the "extension of that form of knowledge by identity which gives us the awareness of our own existence."¹ Similarly agreeing with Henery Bergson Iqbal says that Intuition is "only a higher kind of intellect."² Sri Aurobindo further believes in the possibility of Reason or Intellect being converted into supramental "when the self-awareness in the mind applied, both to continent and content, to ownself and other-self, exalts itself into the luminous self-manifest identity."³

The Intuition grasps the object being known as a whole without breaking its organic unity into small parts. But the Intellect, as we have seen, always proceeds in an analytic way. That is why Iqbal compares physical sciences based on Intellect with the vultures falling on the dead body of knowledge and each of these running away with a piece of it.⁴

Similarly Sri Aurobindo also holds that the Intuition "sees things in the whole, in the large and details only as sides of the indivisible whole; its tendency is towards immediate synthesis and the unity of knowledge. Reason, on

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 78.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 3.

3. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 79.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 43.

the contrary, proceeds by analysis and division and assembles its facts to form a whole; but in the assemblage so formed there are opposites, anomalies, logical incompatibilities, and the natural tendency of Reason is to affirm some and to negate others which conflict with its chosen conclusions so that it may form a flawlessly logical system.¹ Thus in rational knowledge organic unity is lacking. The spiritual knowledge is furnished in a more direct and complete way only by Intuition rather than by intellectual thought.² According to Sri Aurobindo, in the history of man's evolution, the method of Intuition has not been so far used in its most perfect form. We have to develop it still further. The perfect self-luminous Intuition is possible only on Supramental level.³ That is to say that Intuitional method can effectively be employed by the Supermind only. In short, we see that both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal maintain that Reason or Thought or Mind is infinite in its reaches and that Reason itself develops into Intuition. In Iqbal's words, we can say that "thought and intuition are organically related" to each other.⁴ Similarly, Sri Aurobindo regards

1. The Life Divine (Pondicheery, 1960), p. 84.

2. The Life Divine, Vol. II, p. 894.

3. The Life Divine, Vol. I (Calcutta), p. 100.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 5.

Reason and Mind as intermediaries between life-activity and Intuitional knowledge.¹

As both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regard Intellect and Intuition as organically related, it would be profitable to discuss here in some details the nature and relationship of Intellect and Intuition.

4. RELATION BETWEEN REASON AND INTUITION

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal believe that there is no fundamental contradiction between Intellect and Intuition. Both the methods are essentially the same as it is only Intellect which is developed into Intuition. Though the properties and functions of both are different, they are somehow related with each other. Hence according to Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, there is no essential irreconcilability between Intellect and Intuition.

As a matter of fact, intellectual Reason is different from intuition only in degrees not in kind. Iqbal says in a Persian verse that though Intellect is also Intuition and is not unfamiliar to the taste of sight, yet this poor Intellect does not possess that adventurous spirit which is possessed by Intuition.² Just in the same way, Sri Aurobindo says that

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 79.

2. عقل هم عشق است و از ذوق نظر بیگانه نیست
لیکن این بیچاره را آن جرات رندانه نیست

when the intellect begins to tread the path of intuition, it ceases, to be pure intellect.¹ It imbibes the powers of intuition in itself and thus becomes synthesised with intuition.

The philosophical thought is based on Reason or Intellect. There is a natural tendency of philosophical mind to deduce abstract concepts out of the concrete things of life and consciousness. Afterwards, it tends to universalise these abstractions and thus leaving aside any reference to the particulars. In this way, says Sri Aurobindo, the "pure intellectual direction travels away from life."² Exactly the same idea is expressed by Iqbal in a verse which means that the fruit of Intellect is the absence of spiritual realisation. Hence philosophy always maintains a distance from life.³ Intellect or Reason is averse to everything personal and individual. Hence it cannot feel any pangs or restlessness for the supreme Self while love or Intuition yearns for it and wants to establish personal relations with it. And in this restlessness lies the difference between Intellect and Intuition. Thus Iqbal says through a Persian

1. Sri Aurobindo circle Number 6th, 1950, Bombay, Sri Aurobindo : "The Divine Personality." p.58.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

3. انجام خود ہے بے حضوری * ہے فلسفہ زندگی سے دوری
 — Zarb-e-Kalīm, p. 11.

verse the translation of which runs thus : Do you ask, "What is heart inside the chest"? When the Intellect created warmth of passion in it, it became heart.¹ The result of the intellectual pursuit is the philosophical theories or conclusions. "But", says Sri Aurobindo, "any conclusion so arrived at would be only speculative, it could have no spiritual value, it would not give the decisive experience or the spiritual certitude for which the soul is seeking."² In a somewhat similar way Iqbal says that philosophy gives us only a "set of abstraction." It is the job of a poet who uses his creative intuition, to bestow objectivity upon those abstractions.³

Dr. Iqbal writes with supreme command with regard to the mutual relationship of Intellect and Intuition. He says that the two are not "essentially opposed to each other. They spring up from the same root and complement each other."⁴ The Intuition tries to comprehend the Reality as a whole while the Intellect proceeds on in analytic ways. The intuition studies the eternal aspect of the ultimate reality

1. چه می پرسی میان سینه دل چیست * خود چون سوز پیداکرد دل شد
— Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 30.

2. Sri Aurobindo : The Riddle of this World, p. 25.

3. Stray Reflections, p. 96.

4. Iqbal : The Reconstruction, p. 2.

whereas Intellect studies its temporal aspect. In this way as there is no fundamental difference between them, their different being only functional, their synthesis is essential for their "mutual rejuvenation."¹ As a matter of fact Iqbal fully agree with Bergson who holds Intuition to be only the higher form of Intellect.² Sri Aurobindo also holds that Intuition can be operative only when the Reason has cleared the way through correcting our wrong beliefs, prejudices, and blind instincts. Hence though in itself Reason is not "the supreme light, but yet it is always a necessary light-bringer."³ Thus reason comes first, Intuition coming in force only afterwards. Therefore, we cannot stop at and depend wholly on Intellect alone. For the light which Intellect or Reason brings is only a preface to the greater illumination of the Intuition.

Iqbal has made a fine distinction between intellectual and mystic (spiritual) knowledge through quoting some verses from the famous mystic, Jalaluddin Rumi.⁴ Here Rumi says that the guide of an intellectual seeker after musk-gland of the deer is the foot-prints of the deer while the

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1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction, p. 3.
 2. Ibid., p. 3.
 3. Sri Aurobindo : "Evolution", p. 34.
 4. The Reconstruction, p. 92.

guide of the mystic in this quest is, for some time, the foot-prints of the deer but afterwards his only guide becomes the scent of the musk gland itself. It is clear that the mystic is more sure to achieve his object and that too with more expediency.

The inner secrets of the life and supreme Reality are revealed ultimately not to Intellect or Reason but to Intuition alone. Nolini Kanta Gupta, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo remarks that though Reason is essential for the practical or manual side of life, it cannot reveal to us the very secrets of life. In fact Reason being analytical in nature, it is at a loss to comprehend life which is a "mobility, a continuous flow" which has no gaps.¹ So Reason can rightly be called just a helper of the Intuition. This theme has been expressed by Iqbal very beautifully in an Urdu verse the translation of which runs thus: Due to Intellect the traveller's sight is illumined. What is intellect? It is but the lamp by the side of the road. What can the road-side lamp know of the tumults that rage inside the house.²

1. Nolini Kanta Gupta : "The coming Race, pp. 30-31.

2. خود سے راہرو روشن بصر ہے * خود کیا ہے چراغ رہگزر ہے
درون خانہ ہنگامے ہیں کیا کیا * چراغ رہگزر کو کیا خبر ہے

—— Bāl-e-Jibrīl, p. 120.

Hence Iqbal exhorts us not to stop at Intellect or Reason, but to go beyond it because the intellect is merely a road-side lamp; it is not the destination.¹

In the same way Sri Aurobindo says that the reason is our helper only upto a certain stage. After we have passed beyond knowledge and stepped into the field of realization, reason becomes "bar".² It is on this stage that we have to transform reason into ordered intuition. Our ultimate goal lies in illuminating our being through this intuition.³ On this point, the similarity between the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal is very remarkable. In his letter to K.G. Saiyidain, Dr. Iqbal wrote as follows: "I have generally used the word "knowledge" in the sense of

1. Ibid., p.119. It would be interesting to read here a similar reference in Iqbal 'Persian verses which are as follows:

علم را مقصود اگر باشد نظر * می شود هم جاده و هم راهبر
..... *

جاده را هموار سازد این چنین * شوق را بیدار سازد این چنین
بر مقام جذب و شوق آرد ترا * باز چون جبریل بگزارد ترا
(If the goal of knowledge (based on Intellect) becomes insight, it (i.e., Intellect) becomes both the path and guide. It makes the path smooth and revives the aspiration. It brings you at the goal of aspiration and then leaves you alone just like Gabriel).*

* The mention of Gabriel refers to the episode of the Prophet's ascension to heavens (Mairaj) when the angel Gabriel guided the Prophet in the heavens upto a certain point and then left him alone saying that his wings would be burnt if he went farther even a step.

2. Ārya, 8th No., March, 1915 (Pondicherry), p. 610.
3. Ibid., p. 510.

knowledge based on the senses. It gives man power which should be subordinated to Religion. If it is not subordinated to Religion, it is satanic force. This knowledge is the first step to true knowledge, as I have pointed out in Jawed Nama.

'The knowledge of Truth is gained first through the senses and then through direct realization. Its ultimate stages cannot be encompassed within consciousness.' "Knowledge, which cannot be circumscribed within consciousness and which is the final stage of Truth, is also called Love or Intuition.....¹"

The difference between the knowledge based on sense-organs and Reason and the knowledge through the insight of Intuition is very subtle. Intuition gives us a living experience, rather than merely academic scholarship. Iqbal expresses the difference between Intellect and Intuition in

1. K.G.Saiyidain : Iqbal's Educational Phil. (Lahore, 1960) p. 145. English translation from Urdu by K.G.Saiyidain himself.

his poetic way. Thus he says: Hearing this the heart (Intuition) said to Intellect, "It is alright. But, look here, what I am. You understand the secrets of existence but I see them with my eyes."¹

According to Sri Aurobindo the real function of Intellect is to "preside over action." It is unable to comprehend life and reality.² Further elucidating the difference between Intellect and Intuition, Sri Aurobindo says that the "Intellect (logic) goes round the object, intuition enters into the object, one stops at the (absolute), the other enters into the absolute."³ Just like Sri Aurobindo, Iqbal also, being a true-disciple of Jalaluddin Rumi, regards the intellect as subservient to practical life in the world.

دل نہ سن کر کہا یہ سب سچ ہے * پر مجھ بھی تو دیکھ کیا ہوں میں
راز ہستی کو تو سمجھتی ہے * اور آنکھوں سے دیکھتا ہوں میں

— Kulliyāt-e-Iqbāl (Bāng-e-Darā) Lucknow, p.44.
The same thing is expressed in a single Persian sentence *آنچه اوست را ند می بینی* (Whatever he knows I (actually) see). This sentence was uttered by Sultan Abu Saeed Abul-Khair, a great mystic when Sheikh Bu Ali Sina expressed his philosophical scholarships before the Sultan.

— Allamah Shibli Nomani : Sher-al-Ajam, Vol.V. (Azamgarh, 1921), pp. 140-141.

2. Sri Aurobindo : The Hour of God, p. 95.

3. Ibid., p. 95.

In his 'Jāwed Nāmāh', Iqbal says that the Intellect generally goes round and round the mountain but before Intuition the mountain is just like a blade of grass. Heart becomes fast-moving just like moon due to the Intuition.¹

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal make distinction between the knowledge and wisdom which exactly corresponds to the difference of Intellect and Intuition. The product of Intellect is knowledge whereas the product of Intuition is wisdom. In his 'Jāwed Nāmāh', Iqbal distinguishes between knowledge ('Ilm) and wisdom ('Ishq). He says that the knowledge takes its seat in thoughts while the Intuition's lodging is a sleepless heart. Unless the knowledge profits from Intuition it is no more than a magic of thoughts. Without illumination (through Intuition) the man of knowledge could not find his way. He died of the stroke of his own thoughts. Without illumination life is an anguish and the intellect is a (painful) separation and the religion a compulsion. This world of mountains, forests, lands and seas gives us merely indirect information (Khabar) but we want an insight/or direct knowledge. According to Sri Aurobindo, knowledge is arrived at through the "gropings" of the mind and thus only through a distorted medium, while

1. Jāwed Nāmāh, p. 17:

عقل در کوهِ شگافِ می کند * یا بگرد او طوافِ می کند
 کوه بیش عشقِ چون کاهِ بود * دل سریع السیرِ چون ماهِ بود

Intuition sees the truth of the spirit directly.¹ Hence Sri Aurobindo says that he could acquire wisdom only when reason which only feeds knowledge, died away.² In this way we see that reason or Intellect is only a stage in man's spiritual evolution. This stage is to be by-passed by Intuition. Though Intellectual stage is essential, it is by no means the final or the only way open to man. It does attempt to understand the Reality but only waveringly and doubtfully; it does not possess that surity of steps and confidence which is characteristic of the Intuition.³

5. SYNTHESIS OF INTELLECT AND INTUITION

To both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal Intellect or Reason is not the last word in the methods of acquiring knowledge. They assign its proper place as a helper of Intuition and thus stand for the synthesis of Intellect and Intuition which have generally been regarded as opposed to each other. While the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal apparently mark the revolt against intellectualism but in reality it is not so. Because though they give first place to Intuition, they do not fail to give due place to Intellect also.

1. Sri Aurobindo : Thought and Aphormisms, p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 4.

3. Ibid., p. 77.

Sri Aurobindo has no doubt regarding the superiority of Intuition or Love. Comparing an intellectual sceptic and a God-lover, he says, "There can be no doubt which is the mightier. What I cannot understand now, I shall some day master but if I lose faith and love, I fall utterly from the goal which God has set before me."¹ Yet Sri Aurobindo holds that the knowledge of the physical universe derived through Intellect² should be regarded as a part of the knowledge of the Supreme Reality which is to be acquired through Intuition. Therefore, it is obvious that the synthesis of the knowledge through Intellect and the knowledge through Intuition will furnish us with the comprehensive and integral vision of Reality.³

Exactly in the same veins, Iqbal tells us that Intellect only prepares ground for the operation of Intuition which reveals to us the secrets of hidden Reality.⁴ He further maintains that Reason or Intellect and Intuition should be synthesised. In his "Jāwed Nāmāh", he enumerates the advantages of the synthesis of Intellect and Intuition and consequentially the synthesis of the East and the West.

1. Sri Aurobindo : Thoughts and Aphorisms, p. 77.
2. Intellectual knowledge includes empirical knowledge as well.
3. Sri Aurobindo : Evolution, p. 34.
4. The Reconstruction, p. 15.

He says that due to Intuition, the Intellect becomes the knower of the Truth. Due to Intellect the function of Intuition becomes well-founded. When the Intuition collaborates with the Intellect, it becomes the creator of another universe. Iqbal asks us to synthesis Intellect and Intuition for in doing so lies the foundation of a new world.¹ Just like Sri Aurobindo, he also thinks that such a synthesis is in the interest of having an integral vision of Reality.²

According to Iqbal, Intuition furnishes us with the knowledge of those aspects of reality which are not "open to sense perception."³ To Iqbal the justification for synthesising the methods of Reason and Intuition lies in the fact that the ultimate Reality "reveals its symbols both within and without"⁴ — in the realm of spirits as well as in the

1. Jāwēd Nāmāh, p. 71:

زیر کی از عشق گردد حق شناس * کار عشق از زیر کی محکم اسام
عشق چون بازیر کی همبر شود * نقش بند عالم دیگر شود
خیز و نقش عالم دیگر بنه * عشق را بازیر کی آمیزد

2. The Reconstruction, p. 16.

3. Ibid., p. 16. Similarly Sri Aurobindo says, "The senses and sense-mind know nothing whatever about any pure or absolute existence."

—— The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p.80.

4. Reconstruction, p. 16.

material universe. Intellect deals with the manifested aspect of Reality (i.e. Universe), whereas the Intuition tries to know the reality beyond, where the Reason ceases to be of any use.

In fact the choice of the methods of acquiring knowledge corresponds to the stage of development acquired by a man. The first necessity of man's existence in the world is his adjustment to external world. This is achieved through the scientific study of the physical phenomena and the conquest over them. The West has devoted its intellectual activity mainly to this end and has become able to produce many comforts for human life. But its chief emphasis is on bodily needs of man. Sri Aurobindo also recognises these needs and believes that sound bodily health is the first precondition for any spiritual progress.¹ But after achieving this objective through Intellect, we have to take help of Intuition in spiritual pursuits.

Ordinarily, in the development of an individual, the intuitive stage comes after the intellectual stage. But in the history of the development of Indian thought, Sri Aurobindo finds evidence of the fact that, intuitive stage — the stage of Vedas and Upanishads — came first.²

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Supplemental Manifestation, p.8.

2. This reversal does not necessarily imply a negation of the usual order. In fact, the intuitive development, as reflected in Vedic and Upanishadic period, must have preceded by sufficient intellectual development, though we may not have historical traces of that development.

Hence he has characterised the Upanishadic period as the age of intuitive knowledge. This period was followed by the age of rational knowledge in which different schools of metaphysical philosophy sprang up. Next came the age of experimental science in which Reason and senses played a mixed role.¹

6. VALIDITY OF INTUITIVE KNOWLEDGE

There arises a very important question : Should the intuitive knowledge be subjected to a strict rational and logical test? Let us see what Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have got to say in this respect.

Iqbal thinks that as the Intuition has to be operative in our earthly forms, some distortions and alloys are bound to creep into the purity of intuitive knowledge. Hence he says that there is nothing wrong in critically examining the mystic or intuitive experiences.² Through an Urdu verse he remarks that the recipient of Intuition should be vigilant; because sometimes, the communications from the hidden world of spirituality may be wrongly communicated.³ But an

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry) p. 82.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 17.

3. صاحب ساز کو لازم ہے کہ غافل نہ رہے * گاہے گاہے غلط انداز بھی ہوتا ہے سروس³

absolute intellectual test cannot be applied to these experiences. Sri Aurobindo, also thinks that intellect is after all a lower faculty of knowledge than Intuition. Hence the lower cannot be the judge of the higher. However, according to him, the true method of judging the intuitive knowledge is the comparison of the two intuitions; "logical reasoning cannot be its judge"¹. Thus a less luminous, narrower and less essential intuition should give place to more luminous, more perfect and more essential Intuition.²

Yet the intellectualisation of the spiritual experiences is, both Sri Aurobindo and Dr. Iqbal agree, essential as a bridge between the spirit and the reason. For without intellectualisation, inner spiritual experiences may be impure, unsystematised and unbalanced and hence may be misleading.³

Although it is desirable that the Intuition knowledge should be judged by the Intellect but it is not always and absolutely desirable. For, the contents of Intuition knowledge are spiritual and subtle in nature while intellect always deals with what is sensible and

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry), p. 83.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. The Life Divine, Vol. II, p. 894.

concrete and it can prove the existence, for example, of a table in a room. But says, Sri Aurobindo, as the spiritual or mystic experiences are not related to physical facts, they cannot be so proved to exist. Intellect can prove only phenomenal facts and the spiritual experiences relate to the sphere which is beyond these phenomena.¹ Hence they cannot be subjected to intellectual test entirely and absolutely.

To demand physically demonstratable proofs for the truth of spiritual or mystic experiences and failing these to regard them as chimera is unjustifiable. Hence there is no question of spiritual experiences being irrational, for they are inaccessible to reason.² In fact, these experiences lie beyond the reach of Reason or Intellect.

Similarly, while advocating the case in favour of spiritual experiences, Iqbal says that in mystic experiences the thought is reduced to a minimum hence an analysis as in the case of an experience of a table is not possible. Here disagreeing with William James, Iqbal says that the fact that the spiritual experience is not equal to normal

1. On Yoga, II, Tome one, pp. 201,202.

2. Kathopanishad also says:

“ बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टति ”

(And the Intellect attempts not (there in the spiritual spheres)).

sense experience so far its analysability is concerned, does not mean that the mystic cuts himself off from normal consciousness required for normal activities of life.¹ But he is very emphatic on the point that to demand physical proof for the truth of the spiritual experiences is absurd because in demanding so one wrongly assumes that there is only one form of knowledge, that is, sense-perception.²

This is rather a delicate point which requires some elaboration. To a superficial reader the position of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal may appear as self-contradictory but it is not really so. When they say that Intellect is inferior to Intuition and cannot sit in judgment over it, they mean that intuitive truths cannot be proved or disproved through logical reasoning. However, we cannot wholly avoid the use of our logical faculty or Intellect in appreciating the value of Intuition. Even when we are expressing the intuitive truths through language or making any judgment about them, we are using our logical faculty. When an intuitive truth appeals to our heart or attracts our nature, our logical understanding is a witness to it. This means that Intuition carries its own conviction with it and possesses its own criteria within it but the Intellect, though not a superior

1. The Reconstruction, p. 19.

2. Ibid., p. 20.

judge, can appreciate this fact and recognise the truth of Intuition. This very fact that Intuition represents a higher development of Intellect, should enable the Intellect to have at least some dim recognition of its value. That is why, Iqbal in his "Reconstruction" speaks of pragmatic test of revelation.

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are one in asserting that the mystic or spiritual experiences are incommunicable in exact form. For, they are subject of direct experience. So Sri Aurobindo writes that if some mystic wants to explain philosophically his intuitive experiences, he should preface his explanation by these words: "I am explaining a truth which is beyond outer phenomena and the intelligence which depends on phenomena; it really depends on a certain kind of direct experience and the intuitive knowledge which arises from that experience; it cannot be adequately communicated by symbols appropriate to the world of outer phenomena, yet I am obliged to do as well as I can with these to help me towards some statement which will be intellectually acceptable to you."¹

Similarly Iqbal says that since the mystic experiences are direct and since they are more like inarticulate feeling

1. On Yoga, II, Tome One, pp. 203.

than thought, they cannot be communicated with their exact contents. Only the interpretation of their contents can be communicated in the form of propositions.¹

To conclude, the essence of Sri Aurobindo's and Iqbal's views regarding the sources of knowledge is that both Reason and Intuition are essential. Human beings are integral beings as they have to keep up their life on the earth for which they need the guidance of the Intellect and at the same time they have to maintain a personal relationship with the Supreme Self beyond. In this way, for an integral view of life in the world, Intuition starts on its errand where Reason ceases to operate. For the well-being and preservation of life in the world and to build a foundation for a spiritual ascent Reason or Intellect is unavoidably needed. For our spiritual progress, for coming into direct contact with the Supreme Self, Intuition is indispensable. Thus the cooperation of both Intellect and Intuition is essential for a comprehensive and integral view. In the synthesis of Intellect and Intuition, the cultural values of the West and the East are also synthesised in the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. For, the West and the East have been known for their respective

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 22-23.

emphasis on intellectual and intuitive knowledge.

7. PLACE OF KNOWLEDGE IN LIFE

In the end, it may be emphasised that in the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, knowledge is not an end in itself. It is necessary for attaining the true Ideal of life. It places before man an ideal which is to be realised in life and action. Sri Aurobindo offers a test of truly possessing knowledge in these words:

".....to be the Highest that we know is the sign that we really have the knowledge.¹" For Iqbal too, the philosophical knowledge is not an end in itself; to live and to become what a philosophy prescribes as an ideal is the ultimate goal before us. That is why, he remarks that the "ultimate aim of the ego is not to see something but to be something."² In short, knowledge is indispensable, according to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, for revealing the true Ideal of human life and providing with an impetus to realise it in life.

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Pt. II, p. 595.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 197.

CHAPTER III

METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS

Our main object in this thesis is to make a comparative study of the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal with special reference to their views regarding the Ideal of Human Life. In other words, we want to study their philosophies not in their theoretical aspects alone but also in their practical implications for human life. This emphasis on the practical aspect of their philosophies has its justification in the fact that the main philosophical contributions of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal lie in this field. However, the two aspects — theoretical and the practical — in the philosophical system of a thinker do not lie isolated or separate from each other. Generally there is an organic relationship between them. One part presupposes the other, or necessarily follows from the other, or is at least in harmonious relationship with the other. In a consistent and comprehensive philosophical system, the theoretical basis always comes first. It is this theoretical basis or metaphysical foundation which determines the practical aspect of that philosophy. But even if a thinker chooses to confine himself to the discussion of the practical problems of philosophy alone, there is bound to be a certain metaphysical background which underlies his views. Without understanding this metaphysical

background, it is not possible to fully appreciate or evaluate the practical aspect of the philosophy. Sri Aurobindo also thinks that the metaphysical views are the natural determinant of the whole conception of life. The aim of life is structured on the metaphysical basis.¹ Therefore, in our study of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal we propose to discuss first the metaphysical background of their views regarding the ideal of human life.

As we know, the main springs of Indian Philosophy are the Vedas and Upanishads. Similarly the main source of Muslim thought lies in the Quran. These scriptures, by virtue of their very nature, admit the possibility of varied interpretations. And at times their statements seem conflicting with one another. That is why, we have many schools of thought both in Indian and Muslim philosophies which are directly or indirectly based on these scriptures. Different schools of thought find support for their different points of view in these very scriptures. For instance, many a thinker was led to interpret their teaching as implying asceticism as the true ideal of human life; while others could well found sufficient ground in these scriptures to prove that this world is not an illusion or a despicable thing meant to be renounced and that the one principal goal placed before us by the Supreme Self is the perfection of life.

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part II, p. 568.

When Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal set themselves on the philosophical voyage, they found many misinterpretations of their respective religious thoughts. Sri Aurobindo came to the conclusion that to regard this world as a painful illusion or a despicable dream and consequently to advocate the philosophy of inaction and asceticism had been the very prominent feature of the Indian philosophical tradition. The impetus to this fatal philosophical tendency was given by certain schools of Buddhism and the interpretations of Vedanta by Shankaracharya.¹ The reason for this he found in the fact that the celebrated Vedic statement, "One without second"² was not read in sufficient light of another "equally imperative" Vedic statement, viz., "All this is Brahman"³ Thus while it is true that Brahman is One without second, it is also true that all this which we see as world is the manifestation of Brahman itself and hence it is also Brahman and is real. Unless we are able to do full justice in dealing with the 'Matter', i.e., the descending movement of the Divine leaning downward to embrace eternally. Its manifestation⁴, we cannot have the comprehensive vision of the Reality. The Sanyasins

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Renaissance in India, p. 16.

2. "एकमेवाद्वितीयम्।"

3. "सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म।"

4. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 36.

have maintained the unity and oneness of God but have failed, according to Sri Aurobindo, to form any real bond of relationship between God and the universe. Hence they have tended to regard this world as unreal and the one 'Ideal' of human life for them has been the renunciation of the world and the self-extinction in a featureless Absolute. As we shall see, this ideal proved very fatal for the prosperous life in the world.

Similarly Dr. Iqbal was also confronted with a major misinterpretation of the Quran. He thinks that a certain class of mystics misinterpreted the Quranic metaphor of light used to describe God. They failed to see the oneness of God as a Person or Individual. Their logic of thought led them to the pantheistic conception of God as an all-pervasive cosmic element, i.e., light. Iqbal found out that it is true that some Quranic verses define God as 'light' but those verses are not read in full. If the verses in question were read in full context, the deduction of that pantheistic interpretation which regards God as a cosmic element and nothing beyond it, would not have been possible. The full text of the verse runs as follows:

"God is the light of the Heaven and of the earth. His light is like a niche in which is a lamp — the lamp encased in a glass, — the glass, as it were, a star."¹

1. The Quran, 24 : 35 (Translation, The Reconstruction p.64)

Now, interpreting the above verses of the Quran, Iqbal says that it is true that the opening line of the verse seems to afford an escape from the individualistic conception of God. But when we proceed further we see that the conception of God as a formless all-pervasive cosmic element is negated first by centralizing the light in a flame and then through individualising the flame "by its encasement in a glass likened unto a well-defined start."¹ Iqbal's personal view is this that the description of God as light in the revealed literature of the world is meant to suggest God's absoluteness and not His omnipresence.² To describe God's absoluteness, the light is the nearest approach, for, "the velocity of light cannot be exceeded and is the same for all observers whatever their own system of movement."³ Iqbal rejects the metaphor of light as being used to describe God's omnipresence because it destroys the possibility of personality in God and thus leads to pantheistic interpretation.⁴

Here it may be remarked in passing that Iqbal is not opposed to the core of Pantheism as such. To what he seems

1. The Reconstruction, p. 64.

2. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

3. Ibid., p. 65.

4. Ibid., p. 65.

openly opposed are certain implications of Pantheism, e.g., self-negation and escapism. In fact, his pantheism accommodates both the individuality of God and the individuality of man. In this way we have seen how Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal take up the threads of their respective philosophies. Let us now come to the views of our two philosophers regarding the problems relating to God, Universe and man. We know, both the philosophers are theists. We shall presently see in what manner their arguments proceed in favour of the existence of God.

1. PROOFS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

The first very significant thing in this connection which Sri Aurobindo mentions is this that it is wholly erroneous to rely on the testimony of sense-organs to establish or deny the existence of God. He says that our sense-organs can perceive only what is physical and concrete. Whatever is immaterial or non-physical is simply inaccessible to sense-organs. Even same physical realities whose existence we ascertain by other means cannot be perceived by our sense organs. Hence he regards the tendency to associate the real with the materially perceptible as erroneous.¹

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 26.

Sri Aurobindo further says that if we rely upon the evidence and experience, we would be obliged to admit that not only there are physical realities which are suprasensible but there are also supraphysical senses. Here he takes help from Vedic and Upanishadic literature and says that there are subtle organs (सूक्ष्मेन्द्रियाणि) in the subtle body (सूक्ष्म-देह) and the means of subtle vision and experience (सूक्ष्म-दृष्टि)¹. Telepathy is the example to illustrate the point in question. He further says that the subtle senses can bring us in contact with suprasensible realities and hence they should be regarded as real; we cannot reject them summarily because our physical sense organs tell us nothing about them. Therefore, he concludes that there exist realities beyond the physical world.² The Absolute God or Brahman is such a supra-sensible reality.

The second argument which Sri Aurobindo brings in support of the existence of God is that the real observer or witness is consciousness and not the senses; consciousness uses the senses as instruments. Thus the existence of all the realities whether physical or supraphysical depends on consciousness, the witness; they have no independent existence. The greatest witness is God.

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 27.

2. Ibid., p. 28.

Thirdly, Sri Aurobindo says that if we deny God, human life in the world remains unexplained; rather, it becomes unrealistic and insignificant. In such case there are left only two alternatives, that is, either an effort to live life as much as possible of a dispassionate and objectless service of the race and the individual, knowing well that the latter is a ~~transient~~ fiction of the nervous mentality and the former only a little more long-lived collective form of the same regular nervous spasm of Matter.¹ Thus the human life is deprived of any meaning of sense.

His another line of argument is that by enlarging our consciousness to the level of cosmic consciousness and beyond, we can have the experience of the Supreme Self, i.e., God. He further says in this connection that the unknown God is not really unknowable. He can be known not by thought but through Intuition.²

There is yet another way of proving the existence of God according to Sri Aurobindo. Everybody recognises the existence of Matter. Now he says that as modern physics teaches us Matter is not dead or inert but a formulation of force. And since this force is manifesting itself in the

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 30.

2. Ibid., p. 18.

world with a definite insight and a scientific purposefulness, it cannot be regarded as blind. In fact, it is of the nature of "Will" and Will is nothing according to Sri Aurobindo, but "consciousness applying itself to a work and a result."¹ Thus if we analyse the three mind, life and matter we will find that they are nothing but "one energy triply formulated."² In this way from the conception of a self-subsistent materiality, we come to the concept of something which is conscious rather super-conscious or Supreme Consciousness, i.e., God. This Supreme Consciousness, manifests itself in world-forms in varying degrees and "uses the individual as a centre and means, the collectivity as a condition and field."³ Sri Aurobindo support this statement by a statement from Rig Veda which reads as follows: "That which is immortal in mortals is a God and established inwardly as an energy working out in our divine powers."⁴

Now let us see how Iqbal proceeds to support his belief in the existence of God. He, first, critically examine the proofs which have been put forward by different philosophers in the history of philosophy. There are generally

1. The Life Divine, I, pp. 21-22.

2. Ibid., p. 21.

3. Ibid., p. 22.

4. Rig Veda, IV, 2.1.

three lines of argument in support of the existence of God, viz., Cosmological, Teleological and Ontological. Iqbal deals with them and tries to show that they cannot establish the existence of God. He first takes up Cosmological argument for criticism. According to this argument, everything has a cause for its existence. Thus there is a series of effects and causes. Now this chain of effects and causes cannot be carried on infinitely as it will involve the fallacy of infinite regress. Hence we are bound to stop at a first cause which is infinite and itself uncaused. This first cause is God. Criticising this argument, Iqbal says that a finite effect can give us only a finite cause. "To finish the series at certain point, and to elevate one member of the series to the dignity of an uncaused first cause, is to set at naught the very law of causation on which the whole argument proceeds."¹

Secondly, this first cause cannot be regarded as a necessary being. Because the necessity of existence is not identical with the conceptual necessity. This argument gives us, at best, the conceptual necessity only.² Thirdly, in this argument, the infinite is reached by merely negating the finite. Therefore, the infinite excludes the finite and

1. The Reconstruction, p. 29.

2. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

leaves it unexplained. Thus, according to Iqbal, there is in this argument a movement from the finite to the infinite which is logically illegitimate and hence this argument fails in ¹toto.

Now Iqbal takes up the Teleological argument for criticism. This argument asserts that as we find the traces of foresight, purpose and adaptation in nature, (the effect) hence its cause must also be self-conscious and possessed of infinite intelligence and power. Iqbal holds that this argument gives us merely an external contriver, architect or craftsman. The question arises, why this infinite being first creates an intractable matter and then works on it. Being wise and almighty, he should have created this world directly. Further, there is no resemblance between human artificer and the phenomena of nature because the nature is an organic whole and in the state of evolution. Hence the analogy of human artificer does not hold good with regard to God. So this argument also fails.

Now we come to the discussion of Ontological argument. This argument asserts that the necessary existence is contained in the concept of God. This means that necessary existence is actually in God. In other words, we can say that God exists. Descartes further enriches this argument.

1. The Reconstruction, p. 30.

He says that we have the idea of a perfect being in our mind. Whence has it come? The nature which is always changing and is imperfect cannot create the idea of a perfect being. From this he concludes that corresponding to this idea there must actually be a perfect being existing who is the cause of this idea in us. Criticising this argument, Iqbal says that "the conception of existence is no proof of objective existence."¹ Kant had very aptly remarked in this connection that the idea of 100 coins in one's mind cannot prove that he actually possesses them in his pocket. According to Iqbal, this argument involves the fallacy of *petitio principii*. It takes for granted the very thing the existence of which we seek to establish. There is a transition in this argument from the logical to the real.² Hence this argument also fails.

In short, Iqbal thinks, these arguments fail because they hold thought (consciousness) as an agency working on things from without as a mechanician. The ontological argument fails because it creates unbridgeable gulf between the ideal and the real.³

1. The Reconstruction, p. 31.

2. Ibid., p. 32.

3. Ibid., p. 32.

According to Iqbal, thought or consciousness is not external to a thing but a "potency which is formative of the very being of its material."¹ He further says that it is the ultimate ground of things and constitutes the very essence of their being. Constituting thus the very inner self of a thing, it has engendered an urge for self-realization in that thing. The thought and being are ultimately one. Therefore, Iqbal concludes that there is a "unity into a self that knows and a confronting 'other' that is known." If we bifurcate thought and being, we will be forced to regard the object which the self confronts, as "existing in its own right, external to and independent of the self whose act of knowledge makes no difference to the object known."² It is in view of the above that the Quran has regarded God as expressing its symbols both within and without and is "the First and the last, the visible and the invisible."³

As in the case of Sri Aurobindo, Iqbal also tries to prove the existence of God by showing that Spirit and Matter are not two incompatible terms of existence but that the

1. The Reconstruction, p. 32.

2. Ibid., p. 32.

3. Ibid., p. 32.

latter is only a formulation of the former. That is to say, the Spirit and Matter are ultimately one. Iqbal says that the old Newtonian concept of absolute space as a void in which things are situated has been amply refuted by Einstein's theory of Relativity.¹ According to the modern atomic physics the matter is of the nature of electricity — or if we choose to call it, the force energy or movement. In this way the Relativity physics has replaced the static materiality of matter by "a system of inter related events."² Not only this, says Iqbal, Professor Whitehead regards Matter as an "organism."³ Thus Iqbal is led to the conclusion that the classical physics' notion of a self-subsistent materiality does not exist.⁴

Now once we succeed in bridging the gulf between energy and consciousness, we reach the concept of a conscious Agent, i.e., God. Both Iqbal and Sri Aurobindo agree in holding that Matter or Force is not altogether devoid of consciousness. Iqbal says that the thought or consciousness

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 35-36.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

4. Ibid., p. 39. Similarly Sri Aurobindo asserts that concept. It is the formulation of some unknown Force."

— "The Life Divine, I, p. 21.

is a "potency which is formative of the very being of its material."¹ In fact, according to him, consciousness is not something alien to Matter. On the contrary, it is the "very essence", the "Ultimate ground" of the material objects. Consciousness resides in them from the very beginning of their carrier.² He further says that this indwelling principle of objects inspires or impells them to realise progressively their "self-determined end."³ In this way, Iqbal concludes that thought or consciousness and being or Matter are ultimately one.⁴ This ultimate principle of the universe is Spirit or God.

2. DIVINE ATTRIBUTES:

Sri Aurobindo holds that the One, Infinite, Inalienable, Ineffable and Imutable Absolute, the Ultimate Reality has been termed as Brahman in Vedic literature. This Brahman is Silent, Inactive and Stable (स्थाणु). But then **It** has got another aspect too. This is Active or Manifest aspect of Brahman. The latter aspect of Brahman may be termed as God.

1. The Reconstruction, p. 32.
2. Ibid., p. 32.
3. Ibid., p. 32. For similar reason, Sri Aurobindo calls consciousness as will.
4. Ibid., p. 32.

Now we see that Brahman is one but manifests itself in the multiplicity. It is silent, Inert and Inactive, yet manifests itself in activity. How to resolve these contradictions? Sri Aurobindo asserts that here again as in the case of Matter and Spirit, the solution must be sought in reconciliation and not in antagonism.¹ For the active Brahman and silent Brahman are essentially one. Or else as we have just said, they are two aspects of one and the same Reality. One is negative aspect and the other is positive aspect.²

Sri Aurobindo further says that in Vedic literature the term 'word' (शब्द) has also been used as synonymous of Brahman. Hence Brahman as 'Word' creates this world out of Brahman, the silent, in the same way as the "Word expresses that which is self hidden in the silence."³ Likewise, the eternal passivity of Brahman wants to express itself into an eternal divine activity in innumerable variations which are hidden in Brahman as a potentiality. Thus out of the passive Brahman, the activity of manifestation becomes a possibility. The inert or inactive Brahman serves as a fertile potentiality (which is as yet dormant) which will blossom forth in infinite and multitudinous varieties of actualities which we see in the form of the world.⁴

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 40.

2. Ibid., p. 40.

3. Ibid., pp. 40-41.

4. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 41.

Here for a good analogy, we can take a seed and the plant. Both are quite different and even seemingly opposed to each other, yet what comes out of the seed as plant was already hidden in the seed though in a potential form. Plant is nothing but a realised potentiality of the seed. In the same way, the active Brahman thrives on passive Brahman who is Immutable. When these two aspects of Brahman are combined into a unity, we have a perfect and complete picture of Brahman.¹

The above discussion proves that the silence of Brahman is not the rejection of cosmic activity.² There is no essential contradiction between passive and active or manifested aspects of Brahman. To see a contradiction here is the result of limited consciousness.³ A comprehensive consciousness as that of Brahman is capable of including and harmonising both aspects in a single unity. As silence of Brahman is the possibility of Active and manifest, it is the very supporter of multitudinous forms of the world. This very characteristic of Brahman, thinker Sri Aurobindo, is the

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1. Similarly, man will be perfect only when he preserves in himself the profound calmness and passivity of Brahman and makes it a base for the activity which manifests itself in the life of endless possibilities. This harmonising will make divine life possible here on earth.
 2. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 41.
 3. Ibid., p. 41.

guarantee that even man can be free and at the same time involved in the life activities in the world.¹ In this connection, Sri Aurobindo greatly appreciates Buddha who having attained Nirvana continued to work here in the world for the liberation of the humanity.²

In Vedic and Upanishadic literature the Ultimate Reality is described as "Non-Being". On this point Sri Aurobindo says that if "Non-Being" (and not its expression into being or multitudinous world-forms) were the Alfa and Omega of Brahman, this world and all that which inhabits it, would be merely an 'Illusion or 'Nihil' of Buddhistic Shunyavad and asceticism the only true ideal of human life.³ He further says that as a matter of fact, the Non-Being in the above sense does not exist. The word, 'Non-Being' is itself misleading. Actually Non-Being should not be understood here in the sense of nothingness. This nothingness or non-Being when applied to Brahman should mean only this that It is beyond all positive characterizations.⁴ Brahman's Non-Being is, according to Sri Aurobindo, in no way the total exclusion of being. He says that the reason of calling the ultimate Reality as a Nihil or Zero in certain philosophies,

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 41.

2. Ibid., p. 44.

3. Ibid., p. 42.

4. Ibid., pp. 42-43.

is that this Reality cannot be grasped by our finite mind. Otherwise this is the only true and pure Existence.¹ When we say that out of Non-Being (असत्) being (सत्) appeared, we are only ascribing time to that which is beyond Time.² It means that in a particular "now" the Non-Being resolved to take a cognisable form which could be described in positive terms by our finite minds. However, Sri Aurobindo does not think it to be a correct description of the Ultimate Reality. For, both Being and Non-Being obtained simultaneously.³ In other words, both are eternal.

Sri Aurobindo further says that the state of Non-Being of Brahman is a state of freedom from all its cosmic formulations. The Non-Being aspect of Brahman does not deny this finite expression of itself into Being (सत्) or cosmic existence as real but it only asserts that it is free and unbounded by all these finite formulations.⁴ It can not be bound or made limited by the categories of finite minds.

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 43.

2. Ibid., p. 43.

3. Ibid., p. 43.

4. This view of Sri Aurobindo may be compared to the two aspects of the basic formula of Islamic creed —
 — There is no god, but God — as explained by Iqbal. According to him, the negation and affirmation are inseparable from one another. In the very act of affirming God, we are negating all that is not God.

Hence Sri Aurobindo says that "Non-Being permits the Being even as the silence permits the activity."¹ Thus they are not two contradictories, mutually destroying each other. Rather they are complementary to each other just like the two contraries.²

Sri Aurobindo here distinguishes his own thesis from the previously held illusionistic theory of Shankara. This theory tends to regard the manifested aspect of Brahman as illusory. Sri Aurobindo holds, on the contrary, that this all is not meant to create an illusion or falsehood for us, but to lead us from finite to infinite, from describable to indescribable, from limited to limitless, profoundest and vastest Brahman. He emphatically denies any illusoriness in the world saying, "An omnipresent reality is the Brahman, not an omnipresent cause of persistent illusion."³ The positive characterization of Brahman, i.e., visible world is real and is meant to facilitate effective action in the world.

When we see the Being aspect (manifesting aspect) of Brahman, we find that **It** is a pure Existence (सत्) which is omnipresent. We know that all existence is a disguised Force and since this force is manifesting itself with perfect

1. Ibid., p. 44.

2. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 44.

3. Ibid., p. 47.

intelligence, foresight and design, we have to admit that it is not a brute Force but a conscious Force or Consciousness - Force (चित्-शक्ति). The omnipotent and all-pervading Consciousness-Force of Brahman is also pure Bliss (आनन्द). For , this force knows no defeat, no incapacity and no limitations. That is why we regard Brahman, in view of these aspects, as the triune of existence (सत्), consciousness ~~Force~~ (चित्) and Bliss (आनन्द) hence Sachchidanand (सच्चिदानन्द). This Sachchidanand is manifesting Himself in the forms of the world. Sri Aurobindo holds that the solution of the problem of one and the many should also be sought on the similar lines as indicated above. The Brahman is one yet It manifests itself into the multiplicity of the world-forms. It possesses the freedom of remaining inalienably One and at the same time. It may choose to express its unity into diversity. Just like silence and Activity Sat and Asat, the one and the Many are also not two contradictory attributes of Brahman but complementary. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo tries to reconcile the Absolute (ब्रह्मन्) and God (ईश्वर). The term Brahman represents the Ultimate Reality in the form prior to the creation. The term Ishwara represents Self or Personal aspect of the Reality in which it resolves to manifests itself into the multitudinous world. Thus we see that Sri Aurobindo believes in the oneness of God as well as in His manifestation in multiple forms. His

God is both the transcendent and immanent. In one of his English verses, he says:

"Thou who pervadest all the worlds below,
 Yet sits above,
 Master of all who work and rule and Know,
 Servant of Love!"¹

Sri Aurobindo's conception of God which we have discussed so far represents an Ultimate Reality which is one and, at the same time, chooses to manifest itself in the multiple forms of the world. These finite forms thus manifested are not illusory but real. It may be remarked here that Iqbal's conception of God is also similar to that of Sri Aurobindo. According to Iqbal, the Ultimate Reality is only one and that it is this Reality which is revealing its symbols both within the sphere of spirits and the physical world.² It is in this spirit that the Quran asks us again and again to reflect over the phenomena of Nature for, they are the symbols of God. By reflecting over this observable aspect of the Ultimate Reality (i.e. world-phenomena) we can know God. Therefore, for Iqbal also, God is One and thus transcendental as well as immanent.

1. Sri Aurobindo : Collected Poems and Plays, Vol.I, p.143.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 16.

According to Iqbal, the necessary corollary of the above-discussed conception is that the universe is not a confronting 'other' to God existing per se with the space intervening between them.¹ The universe is the free creative energy or life of God interpreted in terms of space, time and matter.² Thus the universe is organically related to the life of its maker. We have^{seen} that the attribute of creativeness is not applicable to God in the sense we attribute it in case of a carpenter making a chair out of the wood. Moreover, "there is no creation in the sense of a specific event having a 'before' and an 'after'.³" Further more, Iqbal says that the process of creation is a continuous one; it has not stopped as yet. To prove this, he quotes a verse of the Quran which says that God adds to His creation what He wills.⁴

We have seen that Sri Aurobindo regards the consciousness-force of Brahman as self-formulative in the sense that He needs nothing outside of himself for the purpose of creation. Similarly Iqbal holds that in the creative energy of the Ultimate Self, the deed and thought are identical.⁵ Hence

1. The Reconstruction, p. 66.

2. Ibid., p. 66.

3. Ibid., p. 66.

4. Ibid., p. 69.

5. Ibid., p. 72.

the process of creation is best described by the term self-manifestation or self-revelation.

According to Iqbal, God is Identical with Time. But the Divine Time is absolutely free from the quality of passage. In this time there is no possibility of divisibility, sequence or change. Iqbal regards it as above eternity which means, it has neither beginning nor end.¹ This is the time which is applicable to God.

The knowledge which man possesses always relates to an external object. Iqbal holds that this type of knowledge is always relative and cannot be predicated to God.² We have already seen that the universe, according to Iqbal, is not a confronting 'other' (i.e. external) to God. That is why in Him "thought and deed, the act of knowing and the act of creating are identical."³ So whenever He wishes to do anything, He does not order anything outside of Himself. God's knowledge is also the creative of its object. Thus according to Quran, whenever God wants to do anything, He simply says, 'be' and it becomes. Iqbal thinks that the divine knowledge may be described by the term omniscience. The meaning of

1. The Reconstruction, p. 76.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

3. Ibid., p. 78.

omniscience is, a "single indivisible act of perception which makes God immediately aware of the entire sweep of history, regarded as an order of specific events, in an eternal 'now'.¹" But if we regard God's knowledge as an eternal 'now', this implies that there is a closed universe, a fixed and unalterable order of events — a sense which is contained in the idea of destiny. This implies that the direction of God's creative activity is already determined for all the time to come. Iqbal does not conceive the omniscience of God in this sense. For him, the divine Omniscience implies only an open possibility in the creative life of God and it is in this sense that the future is already existing in God. For whatever comes into being, comes out of God Himself. Or in other words, the future events are nothing but the unfoldment of the inherent creative possibilities of God. Not actualised events but only possibilities exist in God which unfold themselves in due course of time. If we suppose, says Iqbal, God's knowledge to be the revelation of a fixed order of events, no room for freedom, novelty and initiative is left.²

Further, Iqbal tries to reconcile Divine Omnipotence with the demands of Divine Justice and Benevolence which

1. The Reconstruction, p. 79.

2. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

seem to impose limitations upon His Omnipotence. He holds that the Divine Omnipotence in the sense of absence of limitations is an abstract term which if taken literally may mean merely "a blind and capricious power without limits."¹ Therefore, Iqbal is led to think that the limitations are necessary for all activity whether creational or otherwise. That is why the Quran, according to him, regards the Divine Omnipotence as intimately related to the Divine Wisdom. No doubt God is Omnipotent, but He, by virtue of His Wisdom, does not act arbitrarily but in a recurrent and regular way.²

3. GOD AS A SELF OR INDIVIDUAL

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are one in regarding God as a 'Self' or an 'Individual' with a personality. Sri Aurobindo says, "There is one Lord and self and the many are only His representations and becomings."³ Similarly, Iqbal conceives the Ultimate Reality as an Ego or Self and hastens to add that from the Ultimate Ego, only egos or selves can issue forth.⁴ He further says that we are

1. The Reconstruction, p. 81.

2. Ibid., p. 81.

3. The Life Divine, Vol.I, p. 48.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 72.

compelled to think of God "as the unity of a self — an all-embracing concrete self — the ultimate source of all individual life and thought."¹

According to Iqbal, the essential nature of the Reality is spiritual.² To him the very test of Reality is self-consciousness. Thus he remarks : "Only that is, strictly speaking, real which is directly conscious of its own reality."³ To possess self-consciousness is to possess an ego. To possess an ego is to be able to say "I am" or "I exist."⁴ According to Iqbal, to say so is the test of real existence.⁵ He asserts that the degree of reality of a thing varies with the degree of the feeling of 'I-am-ness'. In accordance with the degrees of the feeling of egohood, there are degrees

1. The Reconstruction, p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 72.

3. Ibid., p. 72.

4. Ibid., p. 57.

5. Iqbal expresses this truth very beautifully through his Persian verse. He says in his 'Payam-e-Mashriq', p.38:

من از بود و نبود خود خوشم
اگر گویم که هستم خود پرستم
ولیکن این نوائع ساده کیست

کس در سینه می گوید که هستم

(I am silent as to my existence or non-existence. If I say, 'I do exist', I may be termed as self-worshipper. But what is this simple voice? Somebody in my heart says that I do exist.).

in spirit.¹ The Ultimate Reality is the Supreme Ego. From the Ultimate Ego, finite egos issue forth. Every form of the world down from an atom to human self is the unfoldment of God's self-consciousness. Thus every form is an ego or self. He regards 'Matter' also as a colony of egos but only of a low order. The degrees of the expression of the egohood varies.² Some egos or selves are lower, others are higher. A thing is lower or higher in the scale of being according to the degree of intuition of I-am-ness which is possessed by that thing.³ The ego of metal is lower as compared to the ego of a plant and so on. Iqbal says that the gradually rising note of egohood runs throughout the entire gamut of being. This note reaches its perfection in man.⁴

According to Iqbal, each ego is individual, unique and distinct from other egos. He holds that every ego is "self-centred and possesses a private circuit of individuality."⁵ However he believes that these egos can interact with and respond to one another.⁶ Iqbal regards God also as an

1. The Reconstruction, p. 72.

2. Ibid., p. 72.

3. Ibid., p. 57.

4. Ibid., p. 72.

5. Ibid., p. 73.

6. Ibid., p. 73.

Ego and hence an individual, rather "most unique" individual.¹

Further, Iqbal says that in the history of religious thought of the world sometimes, personality and individuality have not been attributed to the Ultimate Reality or God. The Reality has been regarded as some vague, omnipresent element, e.g. light.² Iqbal holds that such view of God leads to a form of Pantheism which regards Reality as identical with the world and nothing beyond. Iqbal, on the other hand emphatically affirms the personality or individuality of God. Iqbal criticises those thinkers who try to deduce Pantheism from the Quranic metaphor of light used to describe God. He does not think that it implies Pantheism.³ He conceives the personality of God on the pattern of human self which is a unity.⁴ He regards all the individual life and thought in the universe as a derivation from the Supreme Self.⁵

Iqbal considers character to be an essential attribute of self. In God's case, the external Nature is His character. The Nature is the creative activity of God. It is finite

1. R.A.Nicholson : The Secrets of the self, P.XVII.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 64.

3. Ibid., pp. 64-65.

4. Ibid., p. 57.

5. Ibid., p. 57.

as conceived at a particulare moment. But as it is organically related to the Ultimate Reality, it is also infinite in its potentiality of development. Hence Iqbal calls nature as "a living, ever-growing organism whose growth has no final external limits."¹

Just like Henery Bergson, Iqbal interprets our life as ceaseless change.² He further inquires³ if it is possible to attribute change to the Ultimate Ego. He says that according to human judgments, change implies imperfection.³ If, then, change is imperfection, how can it be predicated to God? Iqbal answers this objections by saying that such questions arise due to anthropomorphic conception of God. Our weakness is that we conceive God after our own image. In support of his view, he quotes the verses of Nasir Ali Sirhindi who represents an idol addressing the idol-worshipper (Brahmin) in the following words: 'Thou hast made me after thine own image! After all what hast thou seen beyond thyself.'⁴

1. The Reconstruction, p. 58.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Ibid., p. 60.

4.

مرا بر صورت خویش آفریدی
برون از خویشتن آنچه دیدی

Similar ideas have been expressed by Iqbal in his Persian verse. He says, "I have carved out the idol after my own image. I have painted God after my own form. It is difficult for me to go beyond myself. In whatever condition I am, I am worshipper of myself."¹

Thus we see that Iqbal is against the anthropomorphic conception of God. Again, so far as the question of attributing change to ultimate Ego is concerned, Iqbal says that surely the serial change² (which is, of course, a wrong conception of change) is an imperfection and cannot be attributed to God.³ "Change, therefore, in the sense of a movement from an imperfect to a relatively perfect state, or vice versa, is obviously inapplicable to His life."⁴ Only pure durational change is applicable to God. And such a change or creative activity is not for the realisation of

1. تراشیدم صنم بر صورت خویش
 بشکل خود خدا را نقش پرستم
 مرا از خود برون رفتن محال است
 بهر رنگی که هستم خود پرستم

— Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 76.

2. The idea of serial change is based on Iqbal's distinction between serial time and pure durations which have been explained in a coming section.
3. The Reconstruction, pp. 60-61.
4. Ibid., p. 61.

some goal or for removing certain defect or fulfilling any desire; on the contrary, it is self-revelatory.¹

Iqbal is opposed to the conception of God as a universal life present simultaneously in all things. According to him, life is an "organizing principle of unity."² This principle centralizes varying attitudes of a living organism into a unity for the practical purposes of life.³

However, it should be remarked here that it is not so that Iqbal believes only in the transcendence of God. He very often seems to be laying stress on transcendence to avoid the pantheistic implications, e.g., inaction and asceticism. Otherwise, he believes in the immanence as well. His is not such a God who is sitting on the throne in the heavens unconcerned and away from his servants.⁴ For him, the Ultimate Reality reveals its symbols both in the external world and in the realm of spirits. That is why Quran has laid great

1. The Reconstruction, p. 61.

2. Ibid., p. 62.

3. Ibid., p. 62.

4. Thus in his "Bāng-e-Darā", Iqbal says:

بٹھا کے عرش پہ رکھا ہے تونے اے واعظ
خدا وہ کیا ہے جو بندوں سے احتجاج کرے

emphasis on studying and reflecting over the external world because it represents the signs of God. Though Iqbal believes both in immanence and transcendence of God, he lays emphasis on the latter, because it is more congenial to the notion of Individuality of God.

Iqbal considers the human life as a unity, a closed up ego or self which has been derived from the Supreme Self. This derived self is the finite centre for the working of the creative activity of God. In opposition with certain class of pantheists, he holds that these finite centres of experience are real and "the fundamental fact of the universe."²

An ego or self is a unity of mental states. Moreover, an ego is unique, individual, private and distinct from other egos.³ Iqbal says that according to Bergson, the individuality is a matter of degrees and it is not fully realized in the individuality of man. Bergson further says that though the tendency to individuate is universal one, it is at every step opposed by the tendency towards reproduction. While individuality is a closed unity, reproduction

1. The Reconstruction, p. 57.

2. R.A. Nicholson : Secrets of the self (Intr. by Iqbal) p. xvii.

3. The Reconstruction, pp. 98-99.

implies detachment of some part of the organism. Hence Bergson concludes that the Individuality "harbours its own enemy at home."¹

From the above discussion, Iqbal draws the conclusion that God as an individual does not reproduce. For, "the perfect individual, closed off as an ego, peerless and unique, cannot be conceived as harbouring its own enemy at home." Iqbal says that God is superior to this antagonistic tendency of reproduction.² The Quran has laid great emphasis on this characteristic of God. The Quran does so more to present the view of a perfect individual like God than to attack Christian conception.³

Sri Aurobindo also regards God as a transcendental unity which is the source of all the multitudinous forms of the world we see manifested here. He also regards the individual selves as real and as the centre for the working of the creative activity of God. The collectivity of individuals is the field and condition for this working. He further says that God has made man in his own image

1. Quoted from 'The Reconstruction', p. 63.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 64.

3. Ibid., p. 64.

4.

and Himself has entered, the body of man in the form of self or ego — a necessary centre for the working of Divine creative energy. Thus he establishes an identity between the self of man and Divine self.¹

Sri Aurobindo further holds that the Samam Brahman, just like a mother,² is giving unfailing care and attention equally to everything down from an atom to the most complicated and highest organisation of the atoms, i.e., man.³ Seen from this point of view, there is nothing petty or great in the universe. What we call petty as compared to a planet, may be great by virtue of its superior quality. Hence it is to be maintained that Brahman is equally manifested in everything.⁴ But, says Sri Aurobindo, the description is still misleading. For, though Brahman dwells in everything, it is indivisible⁵ and hence transcendental. Thus Sri Aurobindo just like Iqbal, guards against his theory being misunderstood as pure Pantheism. "The pantheistic view of the identity of the Divine and the universe is a truth, says

1. The Life Divine, I, pp. 22-23.

2. That is why the consciousness-force (चित्-शक्ति) of Brahman is called Mother or प्रकृति (Prakriti) in her creative aspect.

3. The Life Divine, I, p. 109.

4. Ibid., p. 109.

5. Ibid., p. 110.

Sri Aurobindo, "for all this that is the Brahman but it stops short of the whole truth when it misses and omits the¹ supracosmic Reality."

He further holds that if we exercise our intuitive faculty, we shall know that everything profits from the whole of the Brahman at one and the same time. Giving its justification, Sri Aurobindo says that the "Quality and quantity differ the self is equal. The form and manner and the result of the force of action vary infinitely, but the² eternal, primal infinite energy is the same in all."

According to Sri Aurobindo, the individual plays a very significant role in evolution. When Brahman plunged in the inconscient Matter, the self was lost. Thus the one fundamental aim of evolution, according to Sri Aurobindo, is the discovery of this lost self or ego. "..... it is in him (conscious individual being) that the evolving consciousness (of Brahman) becomes organised and capable of awakening to³ its own Reality."

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part II, p. 559.

2. Ibid., p. 110.

3. Ibid., p. 704. According to Iqbal also the object of the processes of the time is that the self of man should be revealed to him.

یہ ہم مقصد گردش روزگار * کہ تیری خودی تجدید پہ ہو آشکار

— Bāl-e-Jibrīl.

Again, Sri Aurobindo writes:- "The immense importance of the individual being which increases as he rises in the scale, is the most remarkable and significant fact of a universe which started without consciousness and without individuality in an undifferentiated Nescience. This importance can only be justified if the self as individual is no less real than the self as cosmic Being or Spirit and and both are the powers of the Eternal.¹" Thus he refutes the position of those who regard human self as unreal and illusory.

Sri Aurobindo calls this self or ego as psychic entity. Defining it, he says, that the psychic entity "is that by which we exist and persist as individual beings in Nature. The other parts of our natural composition are not only mutable but perishable but the psychic entity in us persists and is fundamentally the same always; it contains all essential possibilities of our manifestation but is not constituted by them; it is not limited by what it manifests, not contained by the incomplete forms of the manifestation, not tarnished by the imperfections and impurities, the defects and depravations of the surface being. It is an ever-pure

1. Ibid., p. 704.

flame of the divinity in things and nothing that comes to it, nothing that enters into our experience can pollute its purity or extinguish the flame. This spiritual stuff is immaculate and luminous and, because it is perfectly luminous, it is immediately, intimately, directly aware of truth of being and truth of nature; it is deeply conscious of truth and good and beauty because truth and good and beauty are akin to its own native character, forms of something that is inherent in its own substance.¹"

These views of Sri Aurobindo are in striking resemblance with the views of Iqbal on human individuality and immortality. He also regards the human ego or self as real. He regards it as the luminous point or centre of our being. It "is, the life-spark beneath our dust."² As it is derived from the Ultimate Self, it contains all the divine attributes in potential form. In a verse of "Armughan-e-Hijaz", Iqbal says that the believer is servant but with the attributes of God. His heart is one of the secrets of Divine essence.³ At another place in the same book he remarks :

1. Ibid., pp. 911-12.

2. R.A.Nicholson : The Secrets of the Self, p. 28.

3. Armughan-e-Hijaz, p. 118:

مسلمان بندۀ مولا صفات است
دل او سیر از اسرار ذات است

The existence of the human self is due to the existence of God. The manifestation of the (human) self is due to the manifestation of God. I don't know where this shining pearl (self) would have been if there was no river" (i.e., God, the source of all the selves).¹

We have seen that Sri Aurobindo believes both in the immanence and transcendence of the Ultimate Reality. He further believes God, to be both personal and impersonal. Those who have laid emphasis on the manifested aspect of the Reality (i.e., immanence) believe generally in the impersonal God. The argument of Sri Aurobindo in support of personal God proceeds on the basis of human nature which manifests itself instinctively. He says that there is a natural urge in man that his adoration rises for the Supreme Personality. Unless his own personality and the personality of the Beloved is real, such a way of devotion is impossible. And if we, somehow, start adoring a "shadow of our minds or a bright cosmic phenomenon which vanishes from the eye of Truth", it is possible but the formatation of salvation of

1. Armughān-e-Hijāz, p. 175.

خودی را از وجود حق وجود
 خودی را از نمود حق نمود
 نمیدانم که این تا بنده گوهر
 کجا بود اگر دریا نبود

life, being so vital an issue in itself, cannot be built upon a foundation of wilful self-deception.¹

As in case of other apparent contradictions, Sri Aurobindo tries to reconcile the contradiction between personal and impersonal God in the following way. He says that both the personality and the impersonality are the two aspects of the one and the same Divine and both are contained in his being. Elucidating this point further, he says that these two are the two opposite ways of seeing one and the same thing, or two gates by which we enter the same thing.² We can reach the reality through either way but neither of the two approaches can, by itself, give a complete account of Reality.³

If we look at the Reality from the side, of Intellect, It will appear as an impersonal thought. Looked from the other side, that is, of Intuition, the Reality would appear to be a thinker — a person — who expresses himself in the thought. This aspect is to be called as God (ईश्वर) who expresses himself by will, power and force. In this case the impersonality seems only a fiction and every thing

1. Sri Aurobindo - Circle No. 6th (Bombay), Sri Aurobindo : "The Divine Personality," pp. 55.

2. Ibid., p. 56.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

appears to be a self or personality.¹ Now Sri Aurobindo says that both of the above views are true. He further believes that an integral seeker can reach the reality by both ways traversing them either successively or simultaneously.²

Sri Aurobindo takes the meaning of personality in the sense of "something limited, external and separative."³ The meaning of 'personality' which we have is a separate and individual creature, limited in body and mind who has a particular type of character of its own.⁴ The personality or person is relatively the same and fixed while the body is always changing. Though the personality also changes but "I" of childhood remains the same in old age as well. Sri Aurobindo seems to attribute personality to God in a similar sense but believes. God to be without body. According to him the primitive conception of God included the qualities/ of inconstancy, freak and

1. Sri Aurobindo - Circle No.6th (Bombay), Sri Aurobindo : "The Divine Personality.", pp. 59.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Ibid., p. 60.

4. Similarly Iqbal defines it as self-centred and possessing a private circuit of individuality excluding all selves other than itself — The Reconstruction, p. 73.

caprice, but in the higher conception of God, we attribute¹ to God only those qualities which we regard as ideal. But this conception too contains some elements of anthropomorphism as we try to conceive God after our own image. But in a still higher conception of God, He becomes less anthropomorphic. In this stage we regard God as an Infinite Spirit but still a separate person, a spirit with certain fixed divine qualities as His attributes.²"

About the polytheism of Vedas, Sri Aurobindo believes that the various godheads are the various personalities of the one Divine.³ According to him, the Divine Personality has expressed its own self through us and through the multitudinous universe. Hence the truth of our personality corresponds with the truth of the Divine Personality. The Divine Being is not only an infinite quality (अप्रमत्त-गुण) but also an indefinable conscious existence (अप्रतिर्दिश्यम्). Nevertheless, apart from being infinite quality and indefinable conscious existence, the Divine Personality is a timeless pure existence (सत्). So also our personality or being

1. Sri Aurobindo Circle No. 6 (Bombay).
Sri Aurobindo : 'The Divine Personality', p. 60.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Ibid., p. 61.

is a pure existence. But even this aspect of ours turns to be, in a certain ecstatic state, a merely nothingness (शून्य) in the sense that it derives its existence from a selfless baseless unknowable (अज्ञातम्यम्, अनित्यम्) which can well be described as Nihil or Shunya. Thus we reach a Nihil, or if we prefer to say, an impersonal God.¹

So we see that there appear two aspects of the Ultimate Reality — one is Personal and the other, Impersonal. Both these aspects are equally true of God.² The Impersonal is reached through the way of knowledge and the Divine Person or God is reached through the way of devotion.³

In Iqbal's case, we have seen that he also believes both in the immanence and transcendence of God. This is also the Islamic concept of God.⁴ However, Iqbal lays greater emphasis on the personality of God as the most unique Individual to avoid pantheistic implications.

4. PROBLEM OF SPACE AND TIME

Once we have seen that this universe is the unfolding of the infinite possibilities of God, the

1. Ibid., p. 62.

2. Ibid., p. 62.

3. Ibid., p. 63.

4. Khalifa Abdul Hakim has also remarked, "God of Islam is both personal and impersonal, immanent as well as transcendent."

—— Khalifa Abdul Hakim : The Metaphysics of Rumi, p.103.

question as to how are we to explain the Space and Time, yet remains to be answered. The fact of unfoldment or manifestation means that the Ultimate Reality is expressing itself in the forms of the world. These forms are nothing but varied Space-Time relationships of Matter. And this Matter is nothing, according to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, but Supreme Spirit in disguised form. That is why Iqbal says that Matter is spirit itself "in space-time reference".¹ So the Space and Time are the modes of the unfoldment of God. In other words, we can say that we understand the life of the Ultimate Reality i.e. Spirit through the Space and Time. Sri Aurobindo says that "these two are categories of our consciousness, conditions under which we arrange our perception of phenomenon."² According to Iqbal, "space and time are interpretations which thought puts upon the creative activity of the Ultimate Ego."³ In an Urdu couplet, Iqbal says that God is the essence of Space and spacelessness. Space is nothing but a mode of His expression.⁴ So the Space

1. Ibid., p. 154.

2. The Life Divine, I, p. 113. This view of Sri Aurobindo closely resembles with that of Kant who regards Space and Time as forms of sensibility.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 65.

4. Bal-e-Jibril, p. 18:

وہی اصل مکان ولا مکان ہے
مکان کیا ہے انداز بیان ہے

Time is only an intellectual frame for understanding the creative life of God. The manifesting phase of God's life is comparable to duration which is, as we know, non-successive and non-serial. But, Iqbal believes that our intellect spatialises it and we have the multitudinous objects of the world.¹

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are one in asserting that such an intellectualisation of the pure Reality is essential for the effective action in our every-day life. If we are able to free our mind of these intellectual constructions of Space and Time, we shall have the vision of pure infinite. Existence as it is really in itself.² Explaining the true and essential nature of Space and Time, Sri Aurobindo remarks that with regard to the Ultimate Reality, the Space is only a psychological extension, not a spatial one and the Time is only psychological duration, not a temporal one.³ Expressing the same meaning, Iqbal says that God's infinity is not spatial and temporal. For, He is prior to Space and Time.⁴ The true meaning of the infinity of God is "the infinite inner possibilities of His creative

1. The Reconstruction, p. 66.

2. The Life Divine, I, p. 113. Also, The Reconstruction, p. 65.

3. The Life Divine, I, p. 113.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 57.

activity.¹ He further tells us that the physical universe is only a partial expression of that creativity. That is why Sri Aurobindo says that no totality of phenomena can equate the Absolute. He is much beyond the universe known to us. Hence Sri Aurobindo concludes, "There is something behind the phenomenon not only infinite but indefinable."²

Let us add here that Iqbal does not take the meaning of infinity of God in the sense of infinite extension. He says God's infinity is intensive not extensive.³ We may say on the basis of the afore-going discussion that for both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal the Space - Time infinity of God is only psychological and not physical. Both our authors reject the notion of absolute and fixed Space which was once advocated by Newton and which now stands refuted by Einstein's theory of Relativity. Sri Aurobindo regards Space as "really a constant mobile." To him the conception of Space as "static extension in which all things stand or move together in a fixed order"⁴ is inaccurate. It is to be remarked here that Iqbal does not support Einstein's theory blindly. Iqbal takes the view of 'Time' as a free creative movement the

1. The Reconstruction, p. 65.

2. The Life Divine, I, p. 114.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 65.

4. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), pp. 427-28.

future course of which cannot be predicted. But as the theory of Einstein regards Time as a fourth dimension, it implies, that the future is already given" as indubitably fixed as the past.¹ Sri Aurobindo also says, Time and Space in relation with Real Existence become only symbols; they represent an Eternity which cannot be translated into mental terms known to us.² But as we have said before, in view of the analytical nature of our mind, such dividing categories of Time and Space are essential for the purpose of day-to-day life in the world.

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal refute the concept of Time as 'Serial Time' and consider the true nature of Time as duration. The emergence of movement from the infinite Reality is not a historical-time process to which a date could be given. Iqbal expresses this truth by describing the emergence of movement as a single indivisible eternal "now".³ Similarly Sri Aurobindo holds that no date can be allotted to this emergence of movement. He says, in fact, both Being and Becoming obtained simultaneously. That is why he described this gigantic world-movement as a "beginning-less, endless, ever-new moment".⁴

1. The Reconstruction, p. 40.

2. The Life Divine, I, p. 113.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 49.

4. The Life Divine, I, p. 116.

Again both our authors agree in maintaining that the world-movement which is Time is not divisible. But our habitual working mentality always sees Time as divisible and serial in character. It regards Time as a succession of individual instants. According to Sri Aurobindo, it is only in the Supermind¹ that we have the experience of Pure Time, i.e., duration. He says that our finite minds are always in the habit of perceiving movement in terms of successive Time — in terms of beginnings, middles and ends.² But true Time cannot be divided into past, present and future. Similarly Iqbal criticises Zeno, the famous Greek philosopher in this connection and asserts that movement is an act and is not infinitely divisible as Zeno had supposed. In fact if we divide the act of movement the movement itself is destroyed.³ Our Intuition perceives movement as one and indivisible while Intellect views it as divided into parts. Here it will be interesting to recall

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1. Iqbal describes two kinds of human self, viz., Efficient and Appreciative. The efficient self sees Time as serial while the appreciative self sees Time as Duration. Iqbal's term "Appreciative self" corresponds pretty closely to Sri Aurobindo's term Supermind. While both terms are similar in function, Sri Aurobindo regards Supermind as a Divine Principle involved both in the processes of Descent and Ascent.
 2. The Life Divine, I, p. 116.
 3. The Reconstruction, pp. 38-39.

Bergson's comparison of Intellect with a Cinemetograph which takes many static snapshots of a single moving object. If we see these photos in the film, we would find there no movement. Hence we can say that these mental or intellectual constructions of divisible Space and Time are valid so long as we choose to remain under the spell of reason or thought. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are one in assenting that as soon as we exercise our Intuitive faculty, we do experience only pure movement free from the relativities of Space and Time — the points and instants, as Sri Aurobindo calls them.¹ Rather we can say that in Intuition knowledge, Space and Time are not the same as in ordinary perception. According to Sri Aurobindo, the extension in Space becomes a psychological necessity if we recognise that it is meant only "to make existence manageable by distributing the indivisible whole in a conceptual Space."²

In the same way Iqbal holds that when the Intellect pulverizes pure movement, we have the experience of serial and successional Time. He thinks that this kind of pulverization is adopted by Reality as a method of exposing "its ceaseless creative activity to quantitative measurement."³ Hence if we look at the Time from Divine point of view or

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 116.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

3. The Reconstruction, pp. 59-60.

with the eye of Intuition, we do not see Time as succession of beginnings, middles and ends but as a continuity, a pure duration incapable of any division into past, present and future. Similarly Sri Aurobindo says that continually progressive movement of consciousness is to be termed as Time; he further says that only this Time is applicable to Ultimate Reality.¹

Again, Iqbal says that the Divine Time (i.e. Time applicable to God)" does not admit of divisibility, sequence and change. It is above eternity; it has neither beginning nor end.² Here Iqbal criticises Asharite thinkers for regarding Time as a succession of individual "nows", for, according to their point of view, there would always be a gap, 'a void of time' between every two individual 'nows' of Time and thus the continuity of Time will be broken.³ It is thought or Intellect which always views things in terms of Serial Time and hence as static and spatialised. Iqbal says that it is due to this fact that we see universe as a dead mass of Matter. If we employ Intuition to study the universe, we would see it as a continuous act. Thus, in fact, the universe is dynamic in nature. The Intellect

1. The Life Divine, p. 117.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 76.

3. Ibid., p. 74.

sees the universe as immobile and thence comes the concept of absolute Space in which these "immobilities" are situated and from the succession of immobilities comes the concept of Serial Time.¹

Serial Time is conceived as a line which is already drawn and which is divided into past, present and future. By so conceiving Time, we have to suppose, says Iqbal, that future events are already contained in the womb of Reality. These events are revealed when the proper time comes just as the various pictures in a cinema film.² He criticises this mechanistic view of Time which implies a repetition of certain pre-arranged order of full-fledged events which are to appear in future. Refuting this concept, he says that a future event cannot at all be regarded as an event but only as an open possibility. To him, the future is not a fixed and finished system of events but open possibilities which have to actualise themselves creatively.³ He rejects Serial Time because it robs the Ultimate Reality of creative character and gives it a mechanistic character.

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 52-53.

2. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

3. Ibid., p. 59.

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal think that in true Time i.e., Duration, the Past, Present and Future interpenetrate into one another to form a continuity or an "Organic whole" as Iqbal would call it.¹ Sri Aurobindo expresses the same meaning a bit differently. He says that the world-movement" continuously progresses and increases by the inclusion of all the successions of the past in a present" which at once develops into future. That is why present does not exist, "for it has perished before it is born."² Similarly Iqbal says that the past moves along with the present and operates in it.

In view of inter-penetration of past, present and future into a unity, Iqbal does not think of pure Time as a string made of individual and reversible homogeneous instants.³ In the same way Sri Aurobindo considers each moment or instant of Time as distinct and separate from both its preceding and succeeding moments.⁴ Hence both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regard each instant as absolutely new and original. However, Sri Aurobindo emphasizes the fact

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1. The Reconstruction, p. 50.
 2. The Life Divine, I, p. 117.
 3. The Reconstruction, p. 50.
 4. The Life Divine, I, p. 117.

that the talk of new and original instants should not be taken to mean denial of continuity. Without continuity "there would be no duration of Time or coherence of consciousness."¹ To illustrate this point he refers to the example of a walking man. Though the steps of the walking man are individual and separate, the movement is continuous.²

Sri Aurobindo regards Time as subjective.³ And Iqbal agrees with him on this point also. He says that the objective Time which is conceived on the pattern of objective Space, leaves no place for a creative activity as ~~that~~ of God.⁴ In this connection, Iqbal criticises the metaphor of a flowing stream to describe Time because this metaphor falsely gives the idea of an objective and spatialised Time. Criticising this concept of Time, Iqbal writes, "We cannot understand how a thing is affected on its immersion in this stream, and how it differs from things that do not participate in its flow. Nor can we form any idea of the beginning, the end, and the boundaries of Time if we try to

1. The Life Divine, I, F.N.P. 117.

2. Ibid., F.N.P. 117.

3. Ibid., pp. 116-117.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 75. Iqbal says that Prof. Alexander also seems to hold the same views on this point in his "Space, Time and Deity."

understand it on the analogy of a stream. Moreover, if flow, movement, or 'passage' is the last word as to the nature of Time, there must be another Time to time the movement of the first Time, and another which times the second Time, and so on to infinity.¹

In connection with Iqbal's view of Time it would not be out of place to say a few words about Time as Destiny, a description which has been used by the Quran. Justifying this identity of Time and Destiny, Iqbal says that the Time in the sense of Destiny means only the open possibilities before they are revealed into actuality. In Quran, we read, "God created all things and assigned to each its destiny." Interpreting this verse of the Quran, Iqbal says that the destiny of a thing is not an "unrelenting fate working from without like a task master."² It is not something externally and compulsorily imposed. The true meaning of destiny is the realisable inner possibilities or potentialities of that thing which would actualise themselves freely in future.³ Iqbal puts forward this interpretation of Destiny to justify human freedom. Sri Aurobindo also believes in the freedom of human will. But he does not uphold absolute freedom of

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 74-75.

2. Ibid., p. 51.

3. Ibid., p. 51.

man. Man, according to him, is free to a certain extent beyond which his freedom is subject to the Divine forces.

After going through the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regarding Time as Duration one is led to conclude that both seem to regard Time as Ultimate Reality. Sri Aurobindo says that there is nothing in the world except indivisible movement of Time carrying on its stream a progressive movement of consciousness also indivisible.¹ Further he says that this continuous movement is, in fact, the "sole absolute".² Establishing the identity of the Time and the Absolute Reality still more clearly, he says that "Becoming is the only being."³ Sri Aurobindo quotes the following statement from Śwetaśwatara Upanishad to prove that Time is God: "Some speak of the self-nature of things, others say that it is Time."⁴ In Maitri Upanishad also we read, "Two are the forms of Brahman, Time and the Timeless."⁵

Iqbal also conceives the Ultimate Reality as pure Duration. He says that just as in Duration past, present and future inter-penetrate to form a unity, so also in

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 117.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

3. Ibid., p. 117.

4. Śwetaśwatara Upanishad, VI, I.

5. Maitri Upanishad, VI, 15.

Ultimate Reality, the thought, life and purpose form an Organic whole.¹ According to Iqbal, only self can exist in pure Duration. Hence the Time, according to him, is an essential element in the life of the Reality.² If the change as Duration is not applicable to God, the Reality, He becomes inert and passive, a "stagnant neutrality, an absolute nothing."³ To make it more clear, he says that we cannot conceive motion without Time and the Time is experienced only by a psychic life or self. Hence self is more fundamental than motion. "No psychic life, no time; no time no motion."⁴ According to Iqbal, this is the reason the Quran regards the alternation of day and night, i.e. Time, as the greatest signs of God. Even the Prophet, in one of his sayings, has identified God with Time.⁵ Muhyuddin Ibn-al-Arabi (638-656 A.H.), the famous mystic of Spain, regarded 'Dahr' (Time) as one of the names of God.

In short, the views of both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal coincide in holding that the Ultimate Reality, (God or

1. The Reconstruction, p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 59.

3. Ibid., p. 61.

4. Ibid., p. 71.

5. Ibid., p. 74. Thus the Prophet said, "Do not vilify time, for time is God."

Brahman) which is infinite and ineffable, chooses to bear the garbs of Space and Time so as to express itself into visible "becoming"¹ (i.e. universe), to realise and measure, as Iqbal puts it, "the infinite wealth of His own undetermined creative possibilities."² And yet, agree both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, He is beyond these finite modes of Space and Time. The realisation of this truth comes to us only if we exercise our Intuition which is possible only in a higher consciousness of Supermind or Appreciative self.³ Here Sri Aurobindo warns us against taking the 'becoming' aspect of the Absolute Reality as an illusion or an something despicable.⁴ He insists that the both aspects of Reality are real. Similarly, Iqbal says, "On the one hand, therefore, the ego lives in eternity, by which term I mean non-successional change, on the other, it lives in serial time."⁴ Thus we see that both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal ascribe transcendence as well as immence to the Ultimate Reality.

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 118.
2. The Reconstruction, pp. 77-78, "Space and time would be the same Reality self-extended to contain the deployment of what was within it." - The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 427.
3. The Life Divine, I, p. 118 and the Reconstruction, p. 77.
4. The Life Divine, I, p. 119.
5. The Reconstruction, p. 78.

5. DIFFERENT MEASURES OF TIME

We have so far come across two notions of Time in our discussion, viz., Serial Time and non-serial Time. Iqbal tries to find support from the Quran for these varieties of Time. The Quran declares that God created the Heavens and the earth in six days.¹ Another verse of the Quran reveals that the creation of the heavens and the earth was due to one command of God which was as swift as the twinkling of an eye.²

Interpreting these verses, Iqbal says that if we see the creative movement of this universe with an intellectual eye (which always works in the frame-work of serial time) the universe will appear to us as a process lasting thousands of years. The Quran has described this period as of six days because one divine day is taken as equal to one thousand years according to our calculations. The truth of the longer span of the divine day is contained both in the Quran and the Old Testament. But if we view this process of creation with the eye of Intuition (which always works in durational Time), this movement of creation will appear to us as one single indivisible act.³ Iqbal here admits that there

1. The Quran, 25:60.

2. Ibid., p. 54:50

3. The Reconstruction, p. 50.

are difficulties in explaining this truth in language, for, our language is shaped in the frame-work of Serial Time. To make this point clear, Iqbal gives an illustration from physical sciences. He says that if we start to count the wave-frequencies involved in the perception of the red colour the number of which is 400 billion per second, we will take more than 60,000 years in counting, yet we hold this practically incalculable frequency of wave-motion in a single momentary mental act of perception.¹

Again returning to the question of the longer duration of the divine day as compared to our own earthly day, we can say that there are different varieties of Time according to the different levels of the consciousness of the observer. This truth is admitted by both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Sri Aurobindo remarks that "there is a different Time and Space for each status of our consciousness and even different movements of Time and Space within each status."² It is so because "Time observation and Time movement are relative. Time observation depends not only on the measures used, but on the consciousness and the position of the observer; moreover, each state of consciousness has different Time relation Each state of consciousness has its own Time and yet there

1. The Reconstruction, p. 50.

2. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 429.

can be relations of Time between them; and when we go behind the physical surface, we find several different Time movements co-existent in the same consciousness.¹ To illustrate this truth, Sri Aurobindo gives us the example of dreams where long sequence of happenings occur during the period of few seconds.²

In the Quran, we find mention of the state of "Barzakh, a place to which the soul is sent after death and where it remains till the time of resurrection. On the testimony of the mystic experiences, Iqbal says, "Barzakh is a state of consciousness characterized by a change in the ego's attitude towards time and space."³ To show the plausibility of his interpretation, Iqbal quotes the famous physicist, Helmholtz, who first discovered that nervous excitation takes time to reach consciousness. This encourages Iqbal to say, "our present physiological structure is at the bottom of our present view of Time, and if the ego survives the dissolution of this structure, a change in our attitude towards Time and Space seems perfectly natural."⁴ To illustrate this point,

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960) pp. 429-30.

2. Ibid., p. 430.

3. The Reconstruction, pp. 119-120.

4. Ibid., p. 120.

Iqbal, just like Sri Aurobindo, quotes the example of dreams. He says, "Nor is such a change wholly unknown to us. The enormous condensation of impressions which occurs in our dream-life, and the exaltation of memory which sometimes takes place at the moment of death, disclose the ego's capacity for different standards of time."¹ This whole discussion is summarised by Iqbal in an Urdu verse which states that the spiritual traveller's Time and Space are different every moment as it all depends on his particular stage or experience.²

6. THE PROBLEM OF MĀYĀ OR ILLUSORINESS OF THE WORLD

We have seen that according to Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, the Supreme Spirit or the Ultimate Reality is manifesting itself in the forms of the multiple objects of the world. Now the question naturally arises: What kind of reality is to be attributed to this manifestation? Is it also real as the Reality which it represents? Or else, is it simply an illusion or an unreal appearance? These questions bring us to the problem of Māyā as discussed

1. The Reconstruction, p. 120.

2.

in Indian philosophy. In Muslim philosophy too, there is a significant group of mystics who regard the world as an illusory appearance, under the influence of Platonism or such other philosophies. But according to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, the world and all that it contains is real.

(1) VIEWS OF SRI
AUROBINDO

Sri Aurobindo does not think that this world is illusory or unreal. He criticises those philosophers who neglect the manifest aspect of Brahman, i.e., world of objects, as merely an illusion. He says that certain philosophers have laid emphasis on the unity or oneness of Brahman but have failed to reckon the reality of this world which is nothing but the unfolding or becoming aspect of Brahman. These philosophers have tended to regard this world as merely an illusion and the one obvious result of this attitude has been the spreading of life-killing asceticism and renunciation. In view of the imperative need of recognising the reality of the world, Sri Aurobindo lays great stress on the manifested aspect of Brahman, i.e. the world. He says that this world is the real transformation of the ~~really~~ Real Brahman.

From the fact that there exists nothing outside Brahman, Sri Aurobindo deduces an interesting corollary. He says that even if we say that this universe is an illusion or dream, it is willed, originated and perpetually supported by Brahman, the Reality and 'the stuff of which it is made is that Reality'.¹ Here Sri Aurobindo, very pertinently, asks, 'If the gold of which the vessel is made is real, how shall we suppose that the vessel itself is a mirage'.² Thus he concludes, 'Phenomenon is not phantasm; phenomenon is the substantial form of a Truth'.³ That is why Professor T.M.P. Mahadevan characterises Sri Aurobindo's philosophy as "realistic monism".⁴

Thus Sri Aurobindo rejects the concept of universe as an illusion or *Māyā* as it was held by Shankarites and certain Buddhist philosophers. He says that the word "*Māyā*" has been misunderstood. Originally the word "*Māyā*" meant knowledge skill, intelligence or consciousness. But later on, it came to be used in the sense of cunning, fraud or illusion.⁵

1. The Life Divine, I, pp. 48-49.

2. Ibid., p. 49.

3. The Life Divine, I, pp. 49.

4. T.M.P. Mahadevan: Outlines of Hinduism (Bombay, 1950) p. 234.

5. The Life Divine, I, p. 153.

Presenting his own views on this problem, Sri Aurobindo further says that this world is no doubt *Māyā* but it is not unreal in the sense that it does not have any sort of existence.¹ It is *Māyā* because it is not the essential truth of Brahman but only a manifested truth of the being of Brahman into phenomenal forms (i.e., Becoming). In this way we see that the world possesses a phenomenal truth of Brahman's free multiplicity and infinite superficial mutability; it does not possess Brahman's fundamental immutable unity.²

Further elucidating the concept of *Māyā*, Sri Aurobindo holds that an Infinite consciousness in its infinite action can at best produce only infinite results. Now to explain the finite things of the world some selective or limiting faculty of knowledge was needed. This selective faculty is termed as *Māyā* and it is possessed by Brahman in its own self.³ This selective faculty of division and multiplicity of separate individualities which is necessary for action

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 153.

2. Ibid., pp. 154-55.

3. Ibid., p. 174.

Maya is the power of Brahman possessed by it and is indistinguishable from it as the power of burning is indistinguishable from fire. Maya is Chit-Shakti of Brahman and is also termed as Prakriti or Mother of creation.

in the worldly life. This power or *Māyā* is entrusted with the work of forming names and forms (world of objects) out of the infinite Sachchidananda.¹ Thus out of the unfathomable ocean of the being of Sachchidananda, the phenomenal world with multitudinous separateness or individualities begins to emerge by the power of *Māyā*. This sense of individuality, born on our mental level, makes us forget our truth of oneness with Sachchidananda and we begin to regard ourselves as separate and different from Him and the rest of the world.² This is, of course, an illusion produced by the workings of *Māyā*. For, before the working of *Māyā* we did not regard ourselves different from One Sachchidananda. Here Sri Aurobindo wants to emphasize the thesis that the sense of separateness produced due to the workings of *Māyā* is a characteristic of our mental level. On supramental level, the workings of *Māyā* do not produce contradictions and discords but unity and harmony.³ The lower *Māyā* (or *Māyā* of lower mental level) is first to be accepted and then to be substituted by the higher *Māyā* (or the *Māyā* of Supramental level). The acceptance enables us to deal effectively with our finite world of names and forms in view of the practical needs of our life in the world. This

1. Ibid., p. 174.

2. The Life Divine, I, pp. 174-75.

3. Ibid., I, p. 175.

acceptance fulfils the one aim for which Sachchidananda has manifested Himself.¹ This acceptance and substitution serve the purpose of the link between thought and cosmic existence. The illusionists (मायावादी) neglect this link. They think that the world of names and forms is the result of Māyā and this Māyā has no higher purpose whatsoever. Hence this world is unreal and illusory to them.

(ii) IQBAL'S VIEWS:

According to Iqbal, Islam has never doubted the reality of the world. On the contrary, the Quran always exhorts its followers to recognize the reality of this world and to study and meditate on the phenomena of the universe. "The Quran, says Iqbal, "sees signs of the ultimate Reality in the 'sun, the 'moon', 'the lengthening out of shadow', 'the alternation of day and night', 'the variety of human colour and tongues', 'the alternation of the days of success and reverse among people' — in fact in the whole of nature as revealed to the sense-perception of man."² Thus according to Iqbal, one note-worthy feature of the Quran is its emphasis on the observable aspect of Reality.³ For, the

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 175.

2. Iqbal : The Reconstruction, pp. 127-28.

3. Ibid., p. 14.

Ultimate Reality "reveals its symbols both within and without."¹ Iqbal further says that it was this empirical attitude of the Quran towards the actual world which was responsible for making its followers the founders of the modern sciences.²

In one of his early Persian works, "Asrār-e-Khudī", Iqbal more explicitly raises the problem of illusoriness of the world. He admits that certain Muslim mystics adopted the idea of illusoriness of the world and thus developed in them an attitude of other-worldliness.

Iqbal goes deep to analyse the doctrine of illusoriness of the world and the doctrine of the negation of the self and discovers that these doctrines have been invented by the subjugated races of mankind to render their rulers weak and inactive. He has explained this fact allegorically with the help of the story of a herd of sheep who were living happily in a pasture. But unfortunately, some lions happened to^{visit} that pasture and began to eat up the sheep one by one. Fearing the extinction of the whole race of sheep, one old and clever sheep from amongst them thought out a cunning device to render the lions powerless and make them

1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction, p. 16.

2. Ibid., p. 15.

forget their own strength as lions. So that old sheep disguised himself as an inspired prophet and began to preach to the blood-thirsty lions. He told them that they should repent for their evil deeds. They should try to be good and leave their violent habits. For,

"Whoso is violent and strong is miserable:

Life's solidity depends on self-denial.¹"

And therefore, they should take vegetarian food instead of eating the flesh of the sheep. One can practise righteousness only through becoming non-violent. Thus he put the ideal of penury and weakness before the strong lions:

"Paradise is for the weak alone,

Strength is but a means to perdition.

It is wicked to seek greatness and glory,

Penury is sweeter than princedom.²"

Further, that clever sheep preached to them the ideal of self-negation and said to the lions that instead of killing the sheep, they should kill their own "selves" and in that way they will have honour. The exercise of power

1. R.A.Nicholson : The Secrets of the Self, p. 51.

2. Ibid., p. 52.

and violence are the enemies of life. The one wise thing for them is to forget their own self. Lastly he impressed upon them the illusoriness of the world:

"This pasturage of the world is naught,

Naught:

O fool, do not torment thyself for a
phantom.¹"

Consequently, the lions embraced the sheep's creed and as a result of it, they gradually lost their power, strength and courage. They had liking for action no more. 'Their souls died and their bodies became tombs'.² The spiritual fears tormented them. And the irony of the whole thing was that they regarded their decline as moral culture.³

In the following chapter of his "Asrār-e-Khudī", Iqbal brands Plato as a follower of the sheep's creed. Iqbal thinks that it is due to the influence of Plato's philosophy that the Muslim mysticism developed a tendency towards asceticism and the renunciation, which are/outcome of the doctrines of

1. R.A.Nicholson : The Secrets of the Self, p. 53.

2. Ibid., p. 55.

3. Here we find striking similarity between the views of Iqbal and Nietzsche calling the history of diseases and decadence by the name of religion and morality. Cf. Nietzsche : Will to Power, p. 126.

the unreality of the world and self-negation. Iqbal is a severe critic of Plato and all such thinkers who preach the unreality of the world.¹ Criticising Plato's theory of Ideas, Iqbal says,

"Sweet is the world of phenomena to
the living spirit,
Dear is the world of Ideas to the dead spirit."²

Thus Iqbal believes that Plato was a recluse. He had escapist tendencies. He regarded the world as unreal.

Iqbal is also opposed to such philosophers who preach an escape from life:

"Woe to a people that resigns itself to death,
And whose poet turns away from the joy of living,
His mirror shows beauty as ugliness,
His honey leaves a hundred stings in the heart."³

Iqbal has got respect only for such poets who teach us to face the realities of the world manfully and give us a message of vigorous and active life.

1. In fact the muslim mystics, as R.A. Nicholson points out, did not come under the influence of Plato directly. The influence of Plato reached them through Plotinus, whose philosophy (neo-Platonism) they took for Platonism.

2. Ibid., p. 58.

3. Ibid., p. 64.

7. THE NATURE OF THE UNIVERSE:

Now we have to discuss the problem of the Universe or problem about the nature of the world. According to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, this world is not a "finished product" or a block Universe,¹ but is continually developing. Moreover, it is not external and alien to God; there is a close and intimate relationship between God and this world. The world is the manifestation or unfoldment of God Himself. Iqbal believes that this universe is not an already completed product,² done once for all; it is in the state of continuous growth. He quotes the following verse of the Quran to support his point of view:

"He (God) adds to His creation what He wills"
(35 : 1).³

Iqbal further believes that the universe is not a dead mass of matter, lying stretched in space, but a continually growing universe.⁴ It is constantly in the state of durational change as was held by Henry Bergson.⁵ According

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1. The Reconstruction, p. 10.
 2. Ibid., p. 56.
 3. Ibid., p. 10.
 4. Ibid., p. 56.
 5. However, Iqbal criticises him for regarding "pure time as prior to self." The self should come first to which pure duration may be attributed. Ibid., p. 57.

to Iqbal, the essence of the universe is one with duration. That is why he characterises the universe not as a 'thing' but as an 'act'.¹ The universe or Nature presents herself before us as exhibiting a systematic mode of behaviour or character. Now Iqbal asserts that a self is inconceivable without a character. So God being an Individual or Self, the Nature serves as the character of God. It is organically related to the Divine Self. That is why the Quran regards it as the habit of God.² It is the creative activity of God. As it is related with a Creative Self, i.e., God, it is also creative. From its creativeness, Iqbal infers that "it is liable to increase, and is consequently boundless in the sense that no limit to its extension is final."³ In the conclusion, Iqbal sums up his views thus: "Nature, then, must be understood as living, ever-growing organism whose growth has no final external limits."⁴

There is, then, no profane world here but a real world representing to us the behaviour of God. To know the world is to know the behaviour of God. Hence according to Iqbal, in studying the Nature through the physical sciences,

1. Ibid., p. 58.

2. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

3. Ibid., p. 58.

4. Ibid., p. 58.

we are getting closer to the Absolute Reality. Hence he regards a scientist as a worshipper of God.¹

Now coming to Sri Aurobindo, we find that according to Sri Aurobindo also this world is the manifestation or unfoldment of God Himself. We have seen How the Brahman has involved Itself into the material inconscience through seven steps. The emergence or evolution of the Sachchidananda out of His involved state marks the beginning of the world. And as the unfolding Sachchidananda has not yet evolved all the stages (steps), the process of evolution is still going on. In other words, we can say that the world is not an already finished product but it is still in the process of making; it is a growing universe. This process can come to a stand still only when all the involved stages of the Sachchidananda are unfolded. Our Nature has so far traversed only three stages, viz., Matter, Life and Mind. Supermind, Consciousness, Bliss and Infinite Existence are the stages which are yet to be realised. This means that the universe is still developing.

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal agree in regarding the universe as organically related to the Supreme Self. Sri Aurobindo maintains that this universe represents to us the

1. Ibid., p. 58.

manifesting aspect of the Supreme Self. "The world expresses", he says, "a foreseen Truth, obeys a predetermined will, realises an original formative self-vision. — it is the growing image of a divine creation."¹

Again, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are one in asserting that God does not manifest Himself being compelled by some agency outside Himself, "since no such thing exists."² According to Iqbal, the world is not an external object or thing but a growing act organically related to God. It is not a confronting 'other' to God. The universe is the manifestation or unfoldment of God Himself. Further we have to remember that God does not manifest Himself for fulfilling some want or desire or for removing some defect or deficiency in Himself. "God's life", says Iqbal, "is self-revelatory, not the pursuit of an ideal to be reached."³ Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal agree that inspite of unfolding Himself God or Brahman does not suffer any diminution or imperfection. He remains, as ineffable, inalienable and tranquil as He was before. "The Unknowable," writes Sri Aurobindo, "is something to us supreme, wonderful and ineffable which

1. The Life Divine, p. 181.

2. Ibid., p. 48.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 61.

continually formulates Itself to our consciousness and continually escapes from the formulations, It has made.¹ Similarly, Iqbal quotes a disciple of the saint Ba Yazid of Bistam who said that there was a moment of time when God existed and nothing else existed. To this the saint replied, "It is just the same now as it was then."² In the end, Iqbal quotes the following lines of Goethe:

"All the straining, all the striving
Is eternal peace in God."³

8. THE PROBLEM OF TELEOLOGY:

The discussion of the nature of the Universe brings us to the problem of Teleology. We have to see whether this self-unfolding movement of God (i.e., the world) is just blind without any plan, organisation or goal, or is it expressing some foreseen truth, realising an original formative self-vision? We know that Henry Bergson also regards the Universe, just like Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, as an expression of a gigantic creative upsurge or movement. But Bergson holds that the creative movement or *elan vital*,

1. The Life Divine, I, p.46. The Upanishad describes this truth in the following way: "पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवानश्लिष्यते" (If whole is taken out of the whole, it is whole what remains).

— Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, I.4.10.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 66.

3. Ibid., p. 61.

is a blind impulse and there is no foreseen goal or teleos which it is trying to realise. But Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal both disagree with Bergson on this point.

Iqbal very emphatically asserts that the vital movement of the universe cannot be blind and "wholly unilluminated by idea."¹ For him the character of the Reality is "through and through teleological."² Similarly, Sri Aurobindo affirms, "There must be some good and inherent reason in it for the manifestation, to discover which we must proceed on the hypothesis of some potency, some wisdom, some truth of being in all that is manifested."³ Thus Sri Aurobindo concludes that the universe is not "an eternal mockery and illusion."⁴ The teaching of the Quran as quoted by Iqbal, is also very emphatic on this point. It says that God has not created the universe just in sport. There is a purpose or an end in this creation.⁵

Sri Aurobindo deduces the consciousness as the quality of the manifesting impulse from the fact that this force is formulating itself with perfect intelligence and scientific

1. The Reconstruction, p. 55.
2. Ibid., p. 55.
3. The Life Divine, I, p. 47.
4. Ibid., I, p. 47.
5. The Quran, 44:38.

purposefulness even in the sphere of plants and assuredly in the kingdom of animals. Sri Aurobindo thinks that the intelligence exhibited in the workings of animal kingdom is often superior to the mentality of man.¹ So we can affirm that this conscious world-force is formulating itself with a view to some distant purpose, some foreseen goal. There is no waste of force.² Hence the manifesting Force is not blind but a definite will.

Similarly Iqbal says that the one main attribute of consciousness is that it "has a forward looking aspect."³ He further says that without any purpose or goal in view, we cannot proceed forward even in our day-to-day activities. A purpose or teleos is very vital as it provides us with an impelling force to do certain acts. The goal is the motive of an action in this sense. Without motive no action can be performed. Hence there is a definite goal before the universe which it has to realise. Hence Iqbal believes ~~that~~⁴ that the future is not wholly undetermined as Bergson holds.

In fact, Bergson's argument for rejecting teleology is based on the fact that it makes Time unreal and offers

1. The Life Divine, I, pp. 134-35.
2. Ibid., p. 135.
3. The Reconstruction, p. 54.
4. Ibid., p. 155.

only the concept of serial Time in its place. It implies that predetermined events lying in the womb of the Reality are dropping from out of it successively one after the other, in Serial Time. So there is no true creative duration and no real Time according to this point of view. Now Iqbal says that if we take teleology in the above sense, the creative character of Reality is destroyed and it is converted into something mechanical like an hour-glass.¹ Just as the grains of sand drop from the hour-glass one by one, so also the fulfilled concrete future events are lying in the Womb of Reality and out of it, they are appearing one by one on the stage of the world, like puppets moved by some pull from behind.² Iqbal emphatically rejects this sense of teleology. He says that if we take teleology in foregoing sense, it comes to imply the mechanistic concept of life which is untenable.³ In such a teleology, there is freedom neither for God nor for man. A world which is unfolding predetermined and fully shaped events successively, is totally unsuited to free responsible agents.

Again, the universe does not possess a purpose in the sense of a "far-off fixed destination to which the whole

1. The Reconstruction, p. 51.

2. Ibid., p. 55.

3. Ibid., p. 55.

creation moves.¹" The teleology which both Iqbal and Sri Aurobindo advocate is closely related to the concept of 'Duration'. Teleology, according to Iqbal, implies that the portals of future should remain wide open. There should be no fixed order of events but an open and infinite possibility for the future. Thus teleology consists in the realisation of the inherent potentialities or possibilities. Sri Aurobindo also subscribes to this view and says that the purpose of the universe that we can rationally conceive is the perfect emergence of the potentialities of the Brahman in the multiple forms of the world.² The universe, being constantly in a state of change, is a time-process; and a "time process", according to Iqbal, "cannot be conceived as a line already drawn. It is a line in the drawing — an actualization of open possibilities."³

Thus we see that though there is a goal or purpose in the creation of the universe, yet the Teleology cannot be taken in the sense of realisation of a fixed and predetermined plan. Future is an open possibility before us. We create fresh ends and purposes every moment and proceed

1. The Reconstruction, p. 55.

2. The Life Divine, I, p. 136.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 56.

forward to realise them in the field of action.

9. THE PROCESS OF MANIFESTATION: EVOLUTION:

We have seen so far that the universe is a manifestation or unfoldment of the Ultimate Reality having some wisdom and purpose according to which it manifests itself. Now a question arises in this connection : Through what process this manifestation is taking place? Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regard this process as Evolution. There are marked similarities in the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regarding evolution. Both of them think that the evolution is not the result of merely blind physico-chemical forces. In fact, their concept of evolution is that of spiritual evolution. They maintain that the theories of mechanical evolution which regard mind or consciousness, as merely an epiphenomenon of Matter, are untenable. Secondly, their concept of Evolution presupposes the fact of previous involution. That is to say, whatever comes into being as a result of evolution is not an absolutely new creation but that it was already involved or hidden in a potential form in its previous stage. Thirdly, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are not prepared to accept merely the struggle for existence or the adaptation to environment as the sole motive-force behind evolution. For them the urge to attain ever greater delight of existence, ever greater

power and knowledge, to attain higher and higher consciousness, is the main propelling force behind evolution. Fourthly, according to them, the evolutionary process cannot stop at any particular stage, e.g., man. Thus present man is only a transitional being, not the final product of evolution. Man has to transcend his present limitations and incapacities — both physical and mental — and is destined to be Superman who will make a divine life or a kingdom of heaven upon earth possible.

(i) SRI AUROBINDO'S VIEWS:

Sri Aurobindo, criticising the Darwinian theory of evolution, says that this theory tends to explain each following incident in relation to the preceding one. Thus each successive event or phenomenon is the consequence of an event or phenomenon which just preceded it. This vast and wonderful world has, thus evolved out of the nebula. In the same way, protoplasmic life has emerged out of dead matter. The Blind material forces are the real cause of this wonderful edifice of the universe. This scientific theory of evolution conceives the world as an automatic machine which is operated by physio-chemical laws. There is no intelligent or conscious agent behind the universe. This world-machine has somehow come into motion and since then it is going on continually. But this

'some how', according to Sri Aurobindo, represents the¹ greatest gap in this theory.

He further criticises the Darwinian theory of evolution for regarding Matter as the beginning and material of all things and that Mind, Life and Consciousness are nothing but developments out of Matter, or operations of Matter. But Sri Aurobindo very strongly holds that Mind, Consciousness and Life are fundamentally different from Matter. Each form has its own peculiar characteristics and its own special laws. They react upon one another and get enriched by this interaction. But they are irreducible to one another ~~or~~ or to any one common form like simple material force or energy. He further believes that there is no one single creation but a triple world — material, vital and mental — co-existing and inter-penetrating one another. He finds support for this position from the old Vedic idea of the triple world² governed by Law and Truth, which act in all things but their manifestation vary according to the medium in which they work.

In short, Sri Aurobindo's argument seems to be as follows: Since Matter, Life and Consciousness are obviously

1. Sri Aurobindo : Evolution, p. 6.
2. Ibid., p. 7.

different and irreducible to one another and are governed by their own dominant principles, it will not be possible to explain the higher manifestations, (e.g., life and consciousness) on the basis of the principle of a lower order (viz., material force and its special laws). On the other hand, the principles and phenomena of lower order can be seen as the manifestations of the highest Law and Truth (e.g., the ultimate Life principle working in and upon all things).¹

The manifestations are conditioned and determined by the limitations of the medium through which the Reality is manifesting. Sri Aurobindo finds support for his point of view from the Vedas which express the same truth figuratively by saying that the same gods are working on all the planes and maintaining the same essential laws but their modes of working and results vary from level to level.²

Thus according to Sri Aurobindo a mightly Life-Force or principle working in and on Matter is the cause of the emergence of Life in Matter. Here Sri Aurobindo seems to be

1. Sri Aurobindo : Evolution, p. 7.
2. Ibid., p.7. The same truth has been expressed by the spanish philosopher, Ibn Tufayl (d. 1185 A.D.) in a different way. He believes that all things receive their forms or souls from God, but the effects of the soul vary in different objects according to their capacities to receive the soul. It is just like the emanation of light from the sun — different objects reflecting this light in varying degrees, e.g., opaque bodies reflect it dimly; polished metals reflect it clearly and mirrors reflect it still more clearly.
 — Zafar Ahmad Siddiqi: Falsafa-e-Hay Ibn Yaqzan (Urdu) Aligarh, 1952, p.66.

in agreement with Henery Bergson's views regarding 'elan vital'. But Sri Aurobindo is conscious of its limitations also. He says that the modern scientific thought has so far discovered only a mighty vital principle working in the world. It has yet to study and discover the superior mental principle which is working on our limited human mind.¹ Sri Aurobindo further holds that the scientific theory of evolution assumes a sort of "rigid chain of material necessity."² Each following event is the result of all preceding forces and conditions and hence it is predictable by the study of its manifest causes. But, according to Sri Aurobindo, in addition to the manifest causes, there are other causes also which remain latent and defy our attempt at analysis. He describes these latent causes as "Inconscient" or the "subconscient". According to him, Inconscient is that in which the Conscious spirit has gone to sleep. It is not equivalent of something devoid of consciousness. It is superior in every respect to our surface, waking consciousness. Sri Aurobindo believes that this 'unmanifest' which is Inconscient is the fountain out of which the manifest constantly emerges.³

1. Sri Aurobindo : Evolution, p. 8.

2. Ibid., p. 8.

3. Evolution, p. 9.

The evolution, according to its modern exponents, is based on the principle of struggle for existence. Sri Aurobindo is not ready to accept it as the whole truth. It may be true at lower levels. But our human life is largely governed by the principle of love, sympathy and "mutual help or at least mutual accommodation."¹ Moreover, the scientific theory of evolution holds that the animals develop some special characteristics in order to adapt themselves to the environment. And by natural selection only those animals survive who have so acquired new characteristics and the remaining ones perish. The theory further maintains that these acquired characteristics are transmitted to the offsprings through heredity. But the recent researches in the field of heredity tend to contradict the theory of transmission of acquired traits to posterity.² Further criticising the mechanical evolution Sri Aurobindo says that this theory conceives the evolution as a gradual and progressive change in a straight line. But the growth of knowledge in the history of civilization does not show that man is ever marching forward on the road of progress. According to Sri Aurobindo, man progresses only through serious alternations; he sometimes goes back and sometimes moves forward and hence he advances in a zigzag way.

1. Evolution, p. 11.

2. Ibid., p. 4.

The same is the case with the march of evolution.¹ He further remarks that the mechanical theory/maintains that evolution takes place through slow and gradually progressive change. But Sri Aurobindo maintains that "new steps in evolution are rather effected by rapid and sudden outbursts, outbreaks, as it were, of manifestation from the unmanifest."²

The materialists hold Matter as the sole reality and they say that the laws of Matter are the only principles which produce the manifestations of life and consciousness. But Sri Aurobindo believes that the lower level (i.e. Matter) cannot explain the manifestations of higher levels (e.g. Life and Mind), but the principles of higher level can explain and do explain the lower phenomena also. According to him, Matter is the last step of the involving Brahman. The involution of the Brahman can be compared to a plunge by which It disguises itself into the dark inconscience of Matter only to manifest itself later explicitly. The ultimate Reality, Brahman, wants to unfold its Existence (सत्), Consciousness (चित्) and Bliss (आनन्द) in a perfect form out of the dormant state in Matter. The gradual

1. Evolution, p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 10. This view has close resemblance with the theory of Mutations offered by De Vries in 1901 cf: The Columbia Encyclopedia, New York, 1956, page 644).

revelation of this triune of Sat, Chit and Ananda (hence Sachchidananda) in the forms of the world does not contradict but justifies and illumines the concept of modern theory of evolution. The full realisation of this truth brings the old eastern and the new western knowledge closer to each other.

So far as the involution or the descent of Brahman into Matter is concerned, it has not been abrupt but gradual and smooth. However, it must not be supposed that it is a temporal process. The process of descent has been possible through seven steps. The first three steps comprise the higher hemisphere (पार्श्व). The fourth principle serves as a mediating link between the higher hemisphere and the last three steps (अपार्श्व)¹. Sri Aurobindo represents these seven steps through the following diagram:—

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Life Divine (Calcutta, 1939)
Vol. I, p. 404.

GRADATIONS OF MANIFESTATION
THE SUPREME

Sachchidananda - Unmanifest, making possible every
kind of manifestation

Sachchidananda in Manifestation

The Supreme Planes of Infinite Consciousness

- (1) Sat
- (2) Chit
- (3) Ananda

Supermind or Divine Gnosis
(The Self-Determining Infinite Consciousness)

Overmind or Maya

According to Sri Aurobindo, overmind takes all Truth that comes down to it from the Supermind, but sets up each Truth as a separate force and idea capable of conflicting with the others as well as cooperating with them.¹

Through several intervening stages, Overmind leads to Mind, Life and Matter which may be termed as lower levels of creation.

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Hour of God (Pondicherry, 1959)
pp. 89-90.

Sri Aurobindo regards Supermind as a "creative medium"¹ as it produces the finite determinations, divisions and distinctions out of Infinite Reality, Brahman. Without finite determinations, no creation is possible. In Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, there is, however, no creation in the theological sense. He regards our existence as "a sort of refraction of the divine existence, an inverted order of ascent and descent."²

In the process of ascent or evolution the steps involved in descent are reversed. The process of evolution states with Matter. So far, only three stages, viz., Matter, Life and Mind have unfolded themselves. The unfoldment of the remaining stages or principles, viz., Supermind, Bliss, Consciousness and Existence would mark the end of the process of evolution. But since the Supreme Reality or Brahman is infinite in its possibilities, the process of evolution is also infinite. So practically, there is no end to this process. To sum up in Sri Aurobindo's own words : "Involution

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1. Sri Aurobindo : The Life Divine (Calcutta, 1939) Vol. I, p. 404. It would be interesting to compare the views of Sri Aurobindo with those of the neo-Platonists among the Muslim philosophers; for instance, his reference to Supermind reminds us of the views regarding "Active Intellect" as held by Farabi, Ibn-Sina and others.
 2. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 408.

of a superconscient spirit in inconscient Matter is the secret of this visible and apparent world and the evolution of this superconscient (i.e., Supreme Spirit) out of inconscient Nature is the keyword of the earth's riddle.¹

Thus Sri Aurobindo's contention is that without the prior fact of involution, we cannot, consistently, justify the fact of evolution which means the emergence of some new qualities. These qualities must somehow be present in Matter potentially if not explicitly. Without presupposing the fact of involution, there is no possibility of evolution but only of a new creation by an "external creator."² In supposing the existence of an external or extra-cosmic God we will have to face the difficulties of the problem of evil.³ Hence Sri Aurobindo holds that Matter is not totally devoid of Consciousness. The Conscious Spirit is already involved in it potentially or in a dormant state.

Sri Aurobindo has closely studied and analysed the process of evolution going on in the world. According to him, the process of evolution has been following three basic principles: (i) There is an evolution of more and more subtle and intricately organised material forms so that they

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Hour of God, p. 73.

2. Ibid., p. 74.

3. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 142.

may be suitable apparatus for the ever-increasing consciousness.¹ (ii) There is an ever upward evolutionary progress of consciousness from lower grade to higher like a "spiral line or emerging curve."² (iii) In the process of evolution, there is always an integration of all the fundamental elements of each preceding state into following state. It never misses its past fundamental achievements; rather it integrates them in its future errands. This element of integration, according to Sri Aurobindo, makes evolution effective.³

We have seen that Life has evolved in Matter and the Mind has evolved in Life. Now shall we say that the evolutionary process comes to a stand-still at the emergence of Mind-principles? As the very logic of involution justifies, Sri Aurobindo holds that evolution cannot stop because so far only three stages or principles, viz., Matter, Life and Mind, have unfolded themselves. He believes that a necessary corollary of this concept of evolution consists in regarding

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Pt. II, p. 623.

2. Ibid., p. 623.

3. Ibid., p. 623. Iqbal expresses the same truth in the following way: "Life is not change, pure and simple. It has within it elements of conservation also life moves with the weight of its own past on its back..." — The Reconstruction, p. 166.

man, the embodiment of Life and Mind, as only a "transitional being,"¹ his destiny lying not in what he now is but in what he makes of himself in future. He has been the third major step of the evolving Nature. Yet he is beset by many imperfections and incapacities — both physical and mental. A few individuals who have got a bit developed intelligence, are called as genius by us. Below them are millions of men who suffer from weaker mentality. Hence it is clear that even man's possibilities of development are not yet finished. He is not a final stage and zenith of evolution.²

Further elaborating the point under discussion, Sri Aurobindo says, "the fullness of the mental life, the suppleness, flexibility and wide capacity of the intellect, the ordered richness of emotion and sensibility may be only a passage towards the development of a higher life and of more powerful faculties which are yet to manifest and take possession of the lower instrument, just as mind itself has so taken possession of the body that the physical being no

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, pt. II, p. 630.

2. This view of Sri Aurobindo is also supported by Julian Huxley. He says, "So-called modern man and his civilizations are thus in no sense a final product of evolution, but only a temporary phase in the process. Further more, realization of our transitional and midway position demands that we pay attention also to future possibilities."

—— Julian Huxley : "New Bottles for New Wine", (London, 1959), p.45.

longer lives only for its own satisfaction but provides the foundation and the materials for a superior activity.¹*

Now we come to Sri Aurobindo's concept of Supermind. He believes that the Supermind will be the next evolutionary step of the Nature. Just as Nature has worked out man in the living laboratory, i.e., animal, in the same way "Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she (Nature) wills to work out the superman, the god."²*

According to Sri Aurobindo, the supermind is the Truth-consciousness. There is no inconscience, no darkness, no ignorance, no incapacities and limitations, no discords and contradictions in Supermind but light, knowledge, power, harmony and bliss. Thus the supermind will be conducive to the establishment of divine life on earth.

Sri Aurobindo believes that man's possibilities of development are immense. His ultimate destiny lies in being the perfect realisation of Sachchidananda. Like lower animals, man cannot be a slave of blind physical laws; he controls them and utilises them for his own purpose. In man,

1. Sri Aurobindo : The Synthesis of Yoga, p. 15.

2. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 5.

there is a natural impulse to ascend higher and higher on the ladder of progress. He wants to become the master of the natural forces. His spirit always aspires to rise to yet greater heights. He cannot remain satisfied with his present lowness and limitations.¹

The next step towards which the evolving Nature directs man is to bring down the powers of spirit in himself and in the cosmos. Man has yet to spiritualise his being, to flood his mind, life, body and world with spiritual beauties. Thus the emergence of a spiritual man is the supreme goal placed before our evolving Nature.²

Sri Aurobindo has described two main characteristics of the evolution which is now trying to go beyond human mind. First, unlike the previous stages of the evolutionary process which have been somewhat automatic and instinctive, the evolution, hence forth would be conducted and guided by the conscious effort of the man. Secondly, the evolutionary endeavour of man will be for removing Ignorance and attaining unity with God and all the rest of existence.³

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Pt. II, p. 644.

2. Ibid., p. 651.

3. Ibid., p. 653.

(ii) IQBAL'S VIEWS:

Now let us turn to the views of Iqbal regarding the problem of evolution. It may be pointed out here that the concept of evolution is not unfamiliar to the Muslim thinkers. The chief exponents of this theory in Muslim Philosophy are Ibn Maskawaih, Ibn Khaldoon and Rumi. Iqbal also upholds this theory. He tries to find support for his views from the Quran.¹ He criticises the mechanical concept of evolution and gives his own interpretation of the theory.

Iqbal tells us that the mechanical concept of life advocated by mechanical evolution is untenable. He believes that only physical phenomena can be explained on the basis of the concept of cause and effect. But life and mind are to be explained on the basis of the concepts of ends and purposes.² Quoting J.S.Haldane, Iqbal further tells us that a machine is not self-maintaining and self-reproducing while an organism is. An organism possesses a "factual wholeness" and has the qualities of growth and adaptation to environment which are absent in the case of a machine.³

Iqbal has referred to a passage from Wildon Carr to show that Intellect cannot be a by-product of mechanical

1. The Reconstruction, p. 166.

2. Ibid., pp. 43-44.

3. Ibid., pp. 44-45.

evolution. In this passage Wildon Carr asks "How can the intellect, a mode of apprehending reality, be itself an evolution of something which only exists as an abstraction of that mode of apprehending which is the intellect?"¹ If at all the Intellect is evolved from life due to evolution, life must itself be far more superior to Intellect and this abstract mechanical movement cannot be its cause.²

He brings another argument in his support to show that mechanical evolution is not tenable. He says that the whole of the universe is in a state of creative flow — — new forms of life and consciousness emerging constantly. This creative activity is a matter of free choice and is opposed to repetition while the mechanical action is always repetitive. Hence the theory of mechanical evolution is untenable.³ Life is a question of free creative choice which always takes new forms and the science studies only the uniformities of experience, i.e. Laws of mechanical repetition, hence Iqbal thinks that science cannot comprehend life.⁴

1. Quoted in the Reconstruction, p. 46.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 46.

3. Ibid., pp. 51-52.

4. Ibid., p. 52.

We have just referred to Iqbal as sympathetically quoting a passage from Wildon Carr to the effect that Intellect can be taken to have emerged from life only if we hold life to be superior to the Intellect. This view of Iqbal is in conformity with that of Sri Aurobindo. Just as Sri Aurobindo bases his evolutionary concept on the fact of prior involution of the emerging forms, so also does Iqbal. To prove the fact of involution and to prove that the Matter is not dead and inert but inconscient Iqbal says that Matter is not a pure materiality, absolutely devoid of the potentiality of Life and Mind. On the contrary, the Ultimate Reality "that makes the emergent emerge is immanent in nature."¹ Iqbal, to support this idea, quotes the Quran which describes Ultimate Reality or God as "the First and the Last, the visible and the invisible."² Thus we see that Matter is not dead but has the Ultimate Reality immanent in it. It is this truth which Iqbal expresses by saying that "matter is spirit in space-time reference."³

Thus we find that the Highest Reality was already involved in Matter, and that is why it was possible for Life and Mind to have emerged from Matter. Again, Iqbal has defined Matter as a "colony of egos of a low order out of which emerges the ego of a higher order when their association and interaction reach a certain degree of co-ordination."⁴

1. The Reconstruction, p. 106.

2. Ibid., p. 106.

3. Ibid., p. 154.

4. Ibid., p. 106.

Here he says very significantly that this fact of emergence of higher out of lower does not rob the higher of its worth and dignity. The higher cannot be again reduced to the lower, for, other conditions have also played part in this emergence. In this connection, he quotes the upholders of Emergent Evolution who maintain that the emergent is an unforeseeable and new beginning. This new form cannot be explained mechanistically.¹

In the Quran we find the story of the fall of Adam. Iqbal thinks that the legend of Adam is a symbolic way of explaining the presence of evil and suffering in this world.² It has nothing to do with the first emergence of man on earth.³ Man has not fallen from a supersensual paralise. Iqbal quotes the Quran which says: 'And we have caused you to grow from the earth'.⁴ This means that man is not a stranger on this earth. The second implication of the legend, according to Iqbal, consists in describing man's state of rising from a primitive and instinctive state to the state of possessing a free personality capable of doubt

1. The Reconstruction, p. 106.

2. Ibid., p. 83.

3. The same view was held by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan about the story of Adam. See B.A.Dar: "Religious thought of Sayyid Ahmed Khan", (Lahore) pp. 208-209.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 85.

and disobedience.¹ Yet another implication of the legend of Adam taking the fruit of the forbidden tree is to represent man's urge for immortality which is possible only through the reproduction of his species.²

Thus we see that Iqbal does not associate the legend of fall of Adam with the first appearance of man on earth. He seems inclined to think that man has emerged as a result of evolutionary process. In his "Reconstruction", Iqbal has given the views of Jahiz (d. 255 A.H.) Ibn Maskawaih (d.421 A.H.) and Rumi ~~■~~ regarding evolution.³ Jahiz has shown how the changes in animal life occur due to migration and environmental effects. Iqbal regards Ibn Maskawaih's theory of evolution as in full conformity with the modern theory of the origin of man.⁴ Ibn Maskawaih regards date-palm tree as a connecting link between plants and animals. Similarly he holds horse among animals and the Falcon among birds as the highest creation of evolution; and lastly, he regards the ape as the connecting link between animal and man.⁵ Jalaluddin Rumi also believes in a biological evolution which

1. The Reconstruction, p. 85.

2. Ibid., p. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 121.

4. Ibid., p. 121.

5. Cf.: Ibn Maskawaih : Al-Fauz-ul-Asghar.

closely resembles with Darwin's theory of evolution. On the basis of his theory, Rumi considers the immortality of man as a matter of biological evolution. Man's life-career cannot come to an end on death. It has to continue even after death in some higher form. Moreover, the present man and his mental equipment is not the last word in evolution, for, the evolutionary process does not cease to operate after the emergence of man. Thus Iqbal agrees with Sri Aurobindo, Julian Huxley, Pierre Teilhard De Chardin¹ and Nietzsche² who regard man as only a transitional being — not a final product of evolution, his destiny lying in what he makes of his future possibilities. It can be said that the goal before the evolution hence forth is the production of Superman.

Iqbal thinks that the biological evolution, as represented by Darwin, ends on the emergence of man; it has

1. See, Julian Huxley : 'New Bottles for New Wine' (London 1959) and Pierre Teilhard De Chardin: 'The Phenomenon of Man'. They use the terms "Transhumanism" and "Ultrahumanisation" respectively to denote this aspect of man.
2. Nietzsche also believed in the future evolutionary possibilities of man. However, thinks Iqbal, his doctrine of eternal recurrence is a sort of rigid mechanism as the same combinations of energy-centres repeat themselves again and again according to Nietzsche (Reconstruction, p.115). Criticising Nietzsche, Iqbal further says that this eternal repetition is not eternal 'becoming', it is the same idea of 'being' masquerading as 'becoming'.
 — The Reconstruction, p. 186.

no future possibilities for the development of man beyond mind. In this way the modern scientific view of evolution ends in pessimism, death being the culmination of all possibilities.¹ However, Rumi's concept of evolution furnishes us with an optimistic note and kindles in man the fire of enthusiasm for life. It will not be out of place here to quote the verses of Rumi (in English translation) on which Iqbal relies for his interpretation of Rumi's views:

"First man appeared in the class of inorganic things,

Next he passed therefrom into that of plants.

For years he lived as one of the plants,

Remembering nought of his inorganic state so different,
And when he passed from the vegetive to the animal state,

He had no remembrance of his state as a plant
Except the inclination he felt to the world of plants,

Especially at the time of spring and sweet flowers;
Like the inclination of infants towards their mothers,

Which know not the cause of their inclination to the
breat.

Again the great Creator, as you know,

Drew man out of the animal into the human state.

1. The Reconstruction, p. 121.

In angel form; and then away
 Beyond the bounds of night and day,
 And Life and Death, unseen or seen,
 Where all that is hath ever been,
 As One and Whole."¹

It is to be remarked here that the significant feature of Rumi's theory of evolution is this that the guiding force and chief operative principle over this process of evolution throughout has been God. It seems that at every stage, the divine principle has intervened and redeemed the higher out of the lower stage. Thus Rumi says: "Again the great Creator, as you know, drew man out of the animal into the human state."² We thus see that it is the theistic aspect of Rumi's theory of evolution that distinguishes it from the modern scientific theory of evolution.

Let it be noted here that Iqbal has quoted above mentioned theory of Rumi sympathetically, without criticism. So we can safely ascribe ~~these~~ views to Iqbal also. His poetic works also lend support to this view. In one of his verses, he says that the existence whirls round itself for years so that a restless soul (as that of man) may emerge

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 185-86.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 122.

out.¹ In another verse, Iqbal expresses the view that man is the hidden meaning (or goal) of the universe and all the processes of **Nature** are working to discover him.² Thus we see that the process of evolution has been very arduous and painstaking and the main goal before it so far has been the emergence of man.

For the future evolution of man (i.e. after death) Iqbal considers, the survival of the individuality of man as essential. He derives this view from the Quranic verses.³ What kind of medium will the soul adopt after death — whether it will be a physical body or some subtle medium — is not clear to Iqbal. He considers it as simply beyond human knowledge. He further holds that the evolution of man is not completed in this life. So, for the "final working" of man's evolution, second creation is essential. In support of this view Iqbal again quotes the Quran.⁴ Iqbal restrains

1. عمرها بر خویش می پیچد وجود * نایکے بہ تاب جان آید فود
Jawed Namah, p. 3.

3. Bāl-e-Jibrīl, p. 153:

آیہ کائنات کا سنٹی دیرباب تو
نکلے تری تلاش میں قافلہ ہائے رنگ و بو

3. The Quran, 50 : 3,4.

4. The Reconstruction, p. 122.

himself from conjecturing about the nature of the medium which the soul will adopt on the second creation.¹ However, reviewing the past history of man, he is compelled to think that it is highly improbable that man's career should come to an end with the dissolution of his body on death.²

Now to summarize the whole discussion, we find that according to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal it is the Ultimate Reality that was involved in Matter, and out of that involved state it is now infolding itself through evolution. The evolutionary process has so far reached man; yet it has to go beyond man, to some higher form, i.e., superman. As man possesses infinite possibilities of development there is no end to the evolutionary process. Moreover, according to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal death is not the end of all the possibilities of man.

10. PURPOSE OF CREATION

We have seen that according to both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, the universe is the result of the urge of manifestation of the Ultimate Reality (Brahman or God). Now the question arises: Absolute God or Brahman is infinite

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 122-23.

2. Ibid., p. 123.

and ineffable, having no needs and no imperfections whatsoever, what makes Him, then, to manifest Himself in multitudinous forms? Why does He at all take plunge in the world-forms when this involves so much suffering and evils as we find in the world? What is the purpose in God's self-manifestation? Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal affirm that it is due to one reason that the self-manifestation gives a joy, a delight.¹

Sri Aurobindo says that Brahman being absolute and infinite, It possesses self-delight also. As Brahman manifests Its Existence and consciousness-force, so also It expresses Its delight in multitudinous variations.² In short, Brahman creates this vast universe because It takes delight in it. The struggle with Its opposites and coming victorious over them also gives pleasure to Brahman. It is in this sense that Sri Aurobindo regards this world a result of God's creative sport (लीला).

In his 'Bāl-e-Jibrīl', Iqbal also expresses similar views. He says, that movement is essential for life. Constant movement is the only reality, while rest is a mere illusion. The Life takes, delight in extricating itself

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, pp. 137-38.

2. Ibid., pp. 138-39.

after involving itself in complications. It takes pleasure in restlessness and throbbings.¹ The universe, according to Iqbal, consists of egos of different orders. The purpose of the universe is to provide these egos with opportunities of manifestation or self-realisation, which is a source of pleasure to every existant. The purpose and the goal of man's life also is self-unfoldment or self-realisation which consists in assimilating Divine attributes in himself. In this consist his progress and development. Thus to conclude, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal agree that the universe has two-fold purpose. On the higher plane, from the point of view of Brahman or God, we may say that the self-manifestation gives Him delight or joy. From the point of view of man, we may say, the purpose of this manifestation or creation is to offer him field for infinite possibilities of development or self-realisation. This brings us to the supreme goal or Ideal of human life which will be discussed in the next chapter. But before that, it seems worthwhile to consider another significant problem, i.e., the problem of evil and suffering which is connected with the problem of creation.

1. Bāl-e-Jibrīl, p. 171.

11. THE PROBLEM OF EVIL:

In a theistic system, God is regarded as All-Good, All-Blissful and Almighty. This raises a serious problem about the presence of evil (both physical and moral) in the world. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are confronted with this problem. The problem, briefly stated, is as follows : If God is All-Good and All-Powerful, why does He allow so much suffering and evil in the world?

(1) VIEWS OF SRI AUROBINDO:

In an attempt to solve the above mentioned problem, Sri Aurobindo thinks that the problem arises due to a misconception. Some people wrongly think of Brahman as an extra-cosmic personal God. They conceive of God not as this very universe but as one who has created this universe of evil pain and suffering for His creatures and He himself remains unaffected and unconcerned.² Sri Aurobindo further says that on the basis of the theory of the theory of an extra-cosmic God, the problem of evil and suffering cannot be solved.³ However, Sri Aurobindo believes in the Vedantic conception of God, according to which He is one without second. He is one with the Universe and all that

1. Bāl-e-Jibrīl, p. 171.

2. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 142.

3. Ibid., p. 143.

exists in it. Now, if there is evil and suffering in the world it is He Himself who bears it in the creature in whom He has embodied Himself. Thus according to this point of view the problem is totally changed. We cannot say that God has created evil for his creatures. If evil exists, He Himself is as the sufferer.¹

Now the problem appears before us in a different manner: Sachchidananda, being all-Bliss, how does He come to admit pain and suffering into Him? Being absolutely free, why does He not reject the pain and suffering?

Now Sri Aurobindo says that in the process of manifestation into multiple forms, Sachchidananda has distributed in each form His delight just as He has distributed His Consciousness-force.² We can experience delight behind each and every form if we see from the real point of view (पारमार्थिक दृष्टि). Since Sachchidananda has chosen to manifest Himself through a practical world effective action in this world will not be possible without practical point of view (व्यावहारिक दृष्टि). Hence we experience the variations of pure delight — pleasure, pain and indifference. Thus in ordinary or normal life this truth of all-pervasiveness

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 143.

2. Ibid., pp. 151-52.

of pure delight remains hidden from us. But in reality, there is a vast Bliss-self (ज्ञानन्दमय) behind the superficial and limited mental-self (मनोमय)¹. A superficial self cannot be the real self. Thus when we are able to return to our real self, we experience only pure delight in place of pain and suffering.²

Moreover, says Sri Aurobindo, this superficial arrangement of pleasure, pain and indifference is not absolute or necessary one.³ It is quite a matter of freewill to return any kind of response to a particular stimulus. In fact, the present scheme of our responses is the result of our habit-formation; we return ~~ix~~ a particular type of response to a particular type of stimulus because we have become accustomed to do the same.⁴ We can well reverse the established scheme of responses: we can experience pleasure where we used to experience pain and vice-versa. Likewise, we can train our superficial being to return one unalienable delight in place of the mechanical reactions of pleasure, pain and indifference.⁵

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 158.

2. Ibid., p. 158.

3. Ibid., p. 159.

4. Ibid., p. 159.

5. Ibid., p. 159.

Thus, Sri Aurobindo says, a self which has mastered its physical or vital being (i.e. superficial self) can receive both victory and defeat with equal indifference or with equal joy.¹ Sri Aurobindo's conviction is that what happens in the phenomenon of hypnosis can be made the permanent ingradient of normal life.²

In solving the problem of pain and suffering Sri Aurobindo also refers to the principle of Jugupsā as used by Upanishads. Jugupsā has been defined as the repulsion felt by the self against all other selves.³ As a matter of fact 'Jugupsā' has been invented by Nature in course of her evolutionary ascent for the survival of the individual. It is very useful upto a certain stage of evolution. With the emergence of human self other principles come into play and this principle of Jagupsa loses its importance. Hence human self has to establish his harmony and identity with all other selves. For, unless the mental being has attained to this realisation, he cannot come in union with the Ultimate Self. Thus it is obvious that when the mental being starts expanding the boundaries of his own self to

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, pp. 160-62.

2. Ibid., pp. 161-62.

3. Ibid., p. 162.

other selves, Jugupsā also ceases to have importance. For such a man there cannot be any suffering or pain. For such a being, all contacts of things carry in them 'Rasa', (रस) an essence of delight. The attainment of 'Rasa' will enable us to receive all the variations of pleasure and pain with perfect inalienable delight as we receive the experience of sorrow fear, repulsion, pleasure, etc., expressed in works of art and poetry. It is so because we feel here ourselves as detached and disinterested and we do not think of our own self or of self-defence but only of thing and its essence.¹

Now we take up the problem of evil. Sri Aurobindo says that ethics is man's own creation. Man himself has introduced the ethical meaning into the whole of nature. He wants to judge the outer world according to his own personally evolved standards. Sri Aurobindo says that this human attempt is the result of a wilful and obstinate self-confusion.² It effectively prevents him from arriving at real knowledge and complete insight. "Material nature is not

Ibid., pp. 163-64.

1. The Gita has also referred to such a state:

यः सर्वज्ञानमिह स्नेहस्तत्तत् प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि, तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥

(Having come across good and evil, who remains unattached every where, and who neither rejoices with nor hates anything, his intellect is stable).

2. The Life Divine, I, p. 144.

ethical.¹ It does not know good or evil in its working, Animal or vital nature is also non-ethical. None does blame a tiger, nor a storm or fire for the destruction of life etc. Nor do these animal or storms condemn themselves for these acts.²

Sri Aurobindo further says, "Blame and Condemnation, or rather self-blame and self-condemnation" marks the beginning of all ethic.³ We approve as good those things which please us. Similarly we regard as evil those things which are disagreeable to us. Thus we approve good and disapprove evil. Now we have to see, which things please us. Sri Aurobindo holds that Sachchidananda is manifesting Himself through us. In other words, we seek our self-manifestation and self-development just like Sachchidananda. Whatever promotes this self-expression we approve as good; whatever inhibits or hinders this self-expression is regarded by us as evil.⁴

(ii) **STANDARD OF GOOD
AND EVIL**

From the above discussion, Sri Aurobindo deduces a standard of good and evil. He says "Whatever hurts

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 144.

2. Ibid., p. 145.

3. Ibid., p. 145.

4. Ibid., pp. 145-46.

that self-expression, self-development, satisfaction of his progressing self, is for him evil; whatever helps, confirms, raises, aggrandises, ennobles it, is his good.¹"

But as we are always and every moment undergoing evolutionary process, the standard of our self-development and self-expression also changes accordingly. Hence Sri Aurobindo says that there are no absolute ethical standards, they are always relative. That is why no one single ethics can serve the purpose of the advancing humanity. Like us ethics is also a stage in evolution.²

According to Sri Aurobindo, the urge of Sachchidananda towards self-expression is the essence of all ethical impulses. The ethical impulse is a means by which embodied Sachchidananda struggles out of the lower harmony and universality towards a higher harmony and universality which has been broken up by life into individual discords. When this goal has been achieved, Sri Aurobindo believes, ethics will no longer be necessary.³

(iii) IQBAL'S VIEWS:

Let us now consider Iqbal's views regarding the problem of evil and suffering. Just like Sri

1. The Life Divine, I, p. 146.

2. Ibid., p. 146.

3. Ibid., pp. 146-47.

Aurobindo, he is also confront with the problem of evil. He tries to understand this problem in the frame-work of Islam. According to Islam, the world and all it contains is real and possesses a positive existence. And so is the case with the presence of suffering in the world. He finds the facts of moral and physical evil standing out prominently in life of nature and he sees "something terribly positive about it."¹

Now at this stage two points figure out very prominently. First, according to Quran, the world is not a cursed place where the elementally wicked humanity is imprisoned. On the contrary," the Quran declares the earth to be the 'dwelling place' of man and a 'source of profit' to him for the possession of which he ought to be grateful to God."² Thus the Quran says, "And we have established you on the earth and given therein the supports of life. How little do ye give thanks".³ Secondly, what ever evil and suffering we find in the world is not the result of the original sin of Adam infecting all the generations of man, past, present and future. The Quran is very clear on this point. It repeatedly emphasises that every man will be held responsible for only that which he himself has done. And no man will share the burden of the sins of the other.

1. Iqbal : The Reconstruction, p. 81.

2. Ibid., pp. 84-85.

3. The Quran, 7 : 9.

Thus we see that man is in the real world and there exists suffering actually in the world he lives in. Now the question is, how to explain this presence of suffering. Here it may be interesting to note Iqbal's interpretation of the legend of the fall of man referred to in the old Testament as well as in the Quran. For, he thinks, it will give some clue to the understanding of the problem of suffering. Iqbal has maintained that the legend of the fall of Adam from the paradise mentioned in the Quran has not been used to describe the first appearances of man on the surface of the earth. According to him, its "purpose is rather to indicate man's rise from a primitive state of instinctive appetite to the conscious possession of a free self, capable of doubt and disobedience."¹ Thus Adam's first disobedience of God marks the conscious realisation of the possession of freedom of will to choose good or evil. Free personality is according to the Quran, God's trust with man. Now it is upto him to use this trust rightly or wrongly. The Quran itself clears its position regarding good and evil. It says: "And for trial will we test you with evil and with good."²

Dealing with the legend in question, Iqbal further remarks that the word "Adam" has not been used to describe a particular concrete individual but the whole human race.³

1. The Reconstruction, p. 85.

2. The Quran, 21 : 36.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 84.

He believes that it is highly probable that this legend "arose out of the primitive man's desire to explain to himself the infinite misery of his plight in an uncongenial¹ him on all sides in his endeavour to maintain himself."

According to Iqbal, the Quran has split the episode of the fall of Adam into two. The first episode relates simply to the "tree" and the other relates to the "tree of eternity" and the "Kingdom that faileth not". The first episode is mentioned in the 7th and the second in the 20th sura of the Quran. Interpreting the first episode, Iqbal quoting the testimony of Madame Balvataki authoress of "Secret Doctrine", says that "with the ancients the tree was a cryptic symbol for occult knowledge. Adam was forbidden to taste the fruit of this tree obviously because his finitude as a self, his sense equipment and his intellectual faculties, were on the whole, attuned to a different type of knowledge, i.e. the type of knowledge which necessitates the toil of patient observation and admits only of slow accumulation."² On the advice of Satan, he sought a short cut to knowledge by tasting the fruit. Hence, thinks Iqbal, "the only way to correct this tendency was to place him in an environment which, however painful, was better suited to the

1. The Reconstruction, p. 83.

2. Ibid., p. 87.

unfolding of his intellectual faculties.¹ Therefore, Adam was sent to the painful physical environment so that man may have the joy of perpetual growth and expansion through enlarging the possibilities of his knowledge which enriches by the method of trial and error.

According to Iqbal, the purpose of the second episode is to describe man's desire to attain immortality through sexual reproduction.² It is as if life says to death - 'if you sweep away one generation of living things, I will produce another.'³ However, due to the emergence of multitudinous individualities, there issues forth an "awful struggle" for existence. Hence Iqbal believes that this "mutual conflict of opposing individualities is the world pain which both illuminates and darkens the temporal career of life."⁴ The sufferings and other evils are, according to him, the necessary accompaniment of the finitude of our 'self'. Iqbal says that Quran regards time manhood consisting in "patience under ills and hardships."⁴

Thus it is clear that there is the positive existence of suffering in the world. Now as to the reason of its

1. The Reconstruction, p. 87.

2. Ibid., pp. 88.

3. Ibid., p. 88.

4. Ibid., p. 88.

presence, Iqbal says that at the present stage of human evolution, we cannot fully understand the purpose of the presence of suffering. However, he thinks that there can be no meaning behind it except this that the driving power of suffering provides man with a discipline so that his self may become hardened and fortified "against a possible dissolution"¹. Hence Iqbal's conclusion of this problem is this. "We cannot understand the full import of the great cosmic forces which work havoc, and at the same time sustain and amplify life. The teaching of the Quran, which believes in the possibility of improvement in the behaviour of man and his control over natural forces, is neither optimism nor pessimism. It is meliorism, which recognizes a growing universe and is animated by the hope of man's eventual victory over evil."²

The above note finds its ample expression throughout Iqbal's poetry. He defines Life in his poems as a continuous restlessness, constant burning, ceaseless quest and a wish to advance on the journey without longing for destination. Satan represents the presence of suffering and Evil in the world, who, by stimulating activity contributes to richness and abundance of life. He holds that when the life is put in

1. The Reconstruction, p. 89.

2. Ibid., p. 82.

sufferings and difficulties, it struggles to survive and thus becomes stronger and more fortified.

(iv) **STANDARD OF GOOD
AND EVIL:**

We have said before that according to Iqbal, the Ultimate Reality is of the nature of a Self and everything else, being its manifestation, is also a self. The highest goal before us is to manifest the hidden qualities of our 'self'. Iqbal tells us that this 'self' of ours or 'personality' is constantly in a state of tension. If the relaxation ensues, the personality begins to disintegrate. Hence if we wish to save our 'self' against dissolution, we should constantly maintain a state of tension in us. From this fact, Iqbal deduces a standard of good and evil. Thus he remarks that whatever helps in maintaining the state of tension is good and whatever hurts or weakens the state of tension is bad.¹ And naturally these moral values should be relative and changing in accordance with our self-development which is evolutionary in nature.

Iqbal further maintains that the above test of good and evil should also be applied to Art religion and ethics. He says, "The ultimate end of all human activity is Life —

1. R.A.Nicholson : Secrets of the self (Introduction by Iqbal), p. XXII.

glorious, powerful, exuberant. All human art must be subordinated to this final purpose, and the value of everything must be determined in reference to its life-yielding capacity. The highest art is that which awakens our dormant will-force and nerves us to face the trials of life manfully. All that brings drowsiness and makes us shut our eyes to Reality around, on the mastery of which alone Life depends, is a message of decay and death. There should be no opium eating in Art. The dogma of Art for the sake of Art is a clever invention of decadence to cheat us out of life and power.¹

Judging from the above standard, Iqbal criticises a religion which does not make us strong to face the challenges of life bravely and which teaches us to run away from the world. He says², "Woe to that religion which seduces you to sleep and keeps you plunged in deep sleep. Is it some witchcraft, magic or religion? Is it a pill of opium or religion?"

1. The New Era, 1916, Iqbal : "Our Prophet's Criticism of contemporary Arabian poetry," p. 251.

2.

وائے آن دینے کہہ خواب آرد ترا
 باز در خواب گران دارد ترا
 سحر و افسون است یا دین است این
 حبّ افیون است یا دین است این

— Jawed Namah, p.124. Nietzsche also criticised religion for this very reason.

Thus we see that Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal have similar views also with regard to the standard of good and evil. Both regard the self-preservation and self-fulfilment as a true test of good and evil. Whatever helps towards this end is good and whatever puts obstacles to the realisation of the end is evil. And as the development of human self is an evolutionary process, the standard of good and evil relative to the stage of our development. It is not absolute and fixed.

It is time, now, to consider in details the nature of the ideal of human life as conceived by Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. This we propose to do in the next chapter.

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THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE

The main object of the present study is to find out and state the 'Ideal' of human life as conceived by Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. It is the most vital part of their philosophies as the primary aim of our two philosophers is not to arrive at mere theoretical knowledge about Reality but to place before man the Ideal of true self-realisation. It may be pointed out here that an ideal is sometimes looked down upon as something unreal like a chimera or a dream. While discussing the Ideal of human life, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are conscious of this criticism. Therefore, they both try to meet this criticism by showing that there is no contradiction between the ideal and the real. In fact, it is the force of the ideal that puts us on the path of its realisation in our actual life. Sri Aurobindo remarks that the ideals are those truths which have not yet worn the garbs of Life and Matter in the world of actuality. Sri Aurobindo regards the ideals as more real than the actual world which is always ¹changing.

Similarly, Iqbal too, in accordance with the Islamic teaching, regards the ideal and the real not as two contradictory forces which cannot be reconciled. He believes that the

1. Sri Aurobindo : Ideals and Progress, pp. 1-2.

real is animated and sustained only due to the "mysterious touch" of the ideal.¹

Now we see that the nature of the Ideal of human life determines the direction of the course of life. The particular type of the Ideal upheld by Māyāvādins (illusionists) and a certain class of mystics — both Hindus and Muslims — led a great number of people to inaction and asceticism and thus it proved a set-back to the progress of society and humanity in the past. It was maintained that the world is unreal as an illusion; it has no real existence. Even the self of man is an illusion. God is the only reality. The case being so, the highest and noblest "Ideal" of human life was regarded as the merging of the self or the individuality into the essence of the Absolute Reality. The obvious consequence of such an Ideal was inaction and renunciation of worldly life. In fact, it was this negative Ideal against which both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal revolted.

In the introductory chapter, we have referred to Sri Aurobindo's letter to his younger brother, Barinder Kumar. In this letter, Sri Aurobindo criticises the ideal of self-absorption in the featureless Absolute Reality, i.e., Brahman and explains his own position. He clearly states

1. The Reconstruction, p. 9.

that featureless Moksha or Nirvāna is not the true goal of human life. The true Ideal consists in realising God in the life of the individual and in the community.

In the same letter Sri Aurobindo has said that the old way of yoga failed to bring about the harmony of the spirit and life. It regarded the world as Māyā or a transient play and hence developed an attitude of renunciation towards the world. Sri Aurobindo is convinced that the result of this kind of attitude has been the loss of life-power and the degeneration of India. He ridicules this one-sided spirituality in these words: "A few Sanyasis and Bairagis to be saintly and perfect and liberated, a few Bhaktas to dance in a mad ecstasy of love and sweet emotion and Ananda, and a whole race to become lifeless, void of intelligence, sunk in deep 'tamas' — is this the effect of a true spirituality?"¹

Exactly in the same spirit, Iqbal wrote in his introduction to "The Secrets of the Self." He says that the pantheistic Sufism and the English Neo-Hegelians have regarded the "absorption in a universal life or soul as the final aim and salvation of man."² Criticising this Ideal,

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1. Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Vol. XIV, No.3, "A Letter of Sri Aurobindo", pp. 4-6.
 2. R.A. Nicholson : The secret of the self, pp. XVIII-XIX.

he states his own position that the religious and moral Ideal of man is not self-negation but self - affirmation. The way to the realisation of this goal consists in the cultivation of divine attributes here in the individual.¹

As a matter of fact, the principal object of Iqbal in writing his Persian Masnavī "Asrār-e-Khudī" was the refutation of the doctrine of self-extinction or self-negation. In the preface to the first edition of this book, he expressed views which show a remarkable similarity with those of Sri Aurobindo. As this preface throws great light on Iqbal's views regarding the ideal of human life, we take the liberty of quoting it here at some length:² "In the history of human thought the name of Shri Krishna will always be remembered with respect and reverence as this magnificent man criticised the philosophical tradition of his people and country in a very fascinating way. He revealed the truth that to abandon the action does not mean complete inaction; for, the action is the demand of the nature and it is due to it that the strength of life is sustained. In fact, the abandoning of action means that there should be no attachment to the actions and their

1. R.A.Nicholson : The Secret of the Self, pp. XVIII-XIX.

2. Originally the preface is in Urdu.

results.¹ After Shri Krishna, Shri Rāmānuja also followed the same path. But it is regrettable that the truth, the mystery of which Shri Krishna and Shri Rāmānuja wanted to unveil, was again shrouded under the magic of Shri Shankara's logic and the nation of Shri Krishna was deprived of the fruits of his innovation.

"In western Asia, the Islamic movement was also a great message of action. According to this movement, although, the ego is a created being, the individual can become immortal through action. However, with regard to the analysis and discussions about the problem of ego, there is a remarkable and astonishing similarity between the history of Hindu and Muslim thought. The similarity consists in the fact that Sheikh Muhyyuddin Ibn Arabi of Spain adopted the ~~some~~ point of view in his commentaries of the Quran which was adopted by Shri Shankara in his commentary of Gita. Ibn Arabi's commentary has produced very far-reaching effect on the hearts and minds of the Muslims. The scholarship, learning and the forceful personality of this

1. Evidently, here Iqbal is referring to the following Shlokas of the Bhagvad-Gita:

great Sheikh made the problem of the 'unity of existence' (Wahadat-ul-Wujūd) or Pantheism (of which he was an untiring supporter), a permanent element of Islamic thought and gradually all the Persian poets of 14th century were moulded in the same pattern and its ultimate result was that these views reaching the masses deprived almost all the Muslim nations of the joy of action

Thus it is clear that both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal were confronted with the similar problems born of the doctrine of self-negation. Both of them were convinced that this doctrine led to inaction and asceticism. As both of them were opposed to this kind of asceticism and negative view of life and regarded it as a consequence of the tendency to regard human self and this world as unreal, they both were convinced that this kind of philosophy is the result of misinterpretations of their respective religious thought. Both of them felt an urge to correct this wrong philosophy and to give a positive Ideal of human life. Their respective views with regard to the Ideal, we shall discuss in the following sections.

1. SRI AUROBINDO'S CONCEPT OF THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE:

In elaboration of his Ideal of human life, Sri Aurobindo discusses four views regarding the nature of the Ultimate Reality, each of them leading to a different view of the Ideal of human life.

Sri Aurobindo builds his own concept on the basis of his criticism of these views. So it would be worthwhile to discuss these views. They are as follows:-

- (i) Supracosmic Theory of Existence;
- (ii) The Cosmic-Terrestrial View of Existence;
- (iii) The Supraterrestrial or Other-worldly Theory of Existence, and
- (iv) The synthetic or Integral Theory of Existence.

Each of these theories leads to a different view of the Ideal of human life. Let us follow these theories one by one:

(i) Supracosmic Theory of Existence:

According to this theory,

only one Supreme Reality, the Transcendental One is really Real. All the rest — world and the individual — have no real existence. This world is only a vast illusion or a fabric of imagination just like a dream. In its extreme form, the theory holds that human life has no real meaning. The will to live is only an act of ignorance. The only abiding reality is the Para Brahman, the Absolute, the world being only a transitory interlude without any abiding significance.¹ Hence the real ideal of human life is to run away from life and to renounce the world as soon as possible. This world is a mad house and we are mad so long as we do not become sane by forsaking this life and entering into light, truth and

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, part II, p. 569.

freedom. According to this world-view, the true ideal is to attain "Nirvāna"—— "an extinction of the individual and the universe, a self-annulment in the Absolute."¹ This ideal of self-negation has been clearly and boldly proclaimed by the Buddhists.²

Sri Aurobindo further says that certain thinkers of Vedanta School, e.g., Shankaracharya, have regarded this self-extinction as "self-finding." Criticising this point of view, Sri Aurobindo says that this kind of self-finding is not possible if we regard the individual only as unreal and temporary in an illusory world infested with indestructible ignorance (अविद्या). The self-finding in the absolute, according to Sri Aurobindo, is possible only if we regard both the individual and Brahman as interrelated realities. If they are not so and if the individual is only an unreal and temporary thing, the self-dissolution in the Absolute and the world-abolishing affirmation of the Absolute is the only logical conclusion. In such a world-view, there is no explanation of the significance and worth of human life and

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part II, p. 570.

2. Sri Aurobindo tells us repeatedly that originally "Nirvana" did not mean self-extinction, for, even after attaining to it, Buddha continued to live in the world and worked for the liberation of others.

hence it is not acceptable, according to Sri Aurobindo.¹

He further says that the ideal of self-dissolution is not actually preached by the true Vedanta. In Vedanta of Upanishads, the Becoming aspect of Brahman has been accepted as a reality. Thus we read, "All this is Brahman."² And again, "This world is Brahman itself."³ The real Vedanta regards this world to be the real manifestation of the real Brahman and this sanctions our practical and active participation in the life in this world.⁴

According to the world - view of Supracosmic Existence, the individual, after the temporary play in this world, has again to dissolve himself in the source from which he first originated. This self-dissolution is the result of the final self-realisation and the highest fulfilment of the individual self into its original being, the Ultimate Reality.⁵ Thus

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1. The striking similarity between the views of Sri Aurobindo and those of Iqbal on the problem under discussion becomes all the more apparent when we read Iqbal's letter to Dr. Z. A. Siddiqi. Iqbal wrote this letter to him explaining the main spirit of his message. In this letter which is originally in Urdu, Iqbal writes:

"When the orders of God are assimilated by the Ego in such a way that its private inclinations and desires disappear altogether, and the will of God becomes its object, this state of life is termed by some eminent Sufis of Islam as 'Fanā' (extinction); some others have called it 'Baqā' (i.e., that which is sustained as residue). But most of the Indian and Persian mystics have interpreted this problem of 'Fana' under the influence of Vedantic Philosophy and Buddhism. The result is that Mussalmans today are wholly incapable of action. It is my conviction that this interpretation was more fatal than the fall of Baghdad. All my writings, in a way, are a kind of protest against this interpretation."

— Z. A. Siddiqi; Dialectical Materialism and Other Essays, pp. 63-64.

Contd.....next page

the circle of becoming starts from the eternal Being and ends it it. If we view this fact from the point of view of God Himself, the world-existence can be regarded as a play.

Commenting on this world - view, Sri Aurobindo says that the main defect in this theory is that it fails to attach any abiding value to the individuality of man and to his natural or spiritual activities in the world.¹ He further says that the factual reality of our individual being, and the value put on individual perfection and salvation is so great that it cannot be dismissed by just regarding it only a transient phenomenon.²

(ii) The Cosmic - Terrestrial
View of Existence:

Now Sri Aurobindo deals with the second view. It is the materialistic theory of universe. This view of existence is just the opposite of supracosmic

(Continued from previous page)

2. सर्व खल्विदं ब्रह्म — मुण्डकोपनिषद्
3. ब्रह्म एव इदं विश्वम् — मुण्डकोपनिषद्
4. The Life Divine, II, p. 571.
5. Ibid., p. 571.
1. The Life Divine, II, p. 572.
2. Ibid., p. 572.

view which maintains that the Absolute is the only Reality and the rest is all illusion. The cosmic-terrestrial theory holds that only cosmic existence is real and its only concern is life in the material universe. There is no God except this changing universe, i.e., becoming or Nature. According to this view, man is the highest possible form of the becoming. Man as an individual is altogether a transient being. Even humanity, one day, will be effaced from the surface of the earth. All forms of the universe are the formulations of an Energy which is indestructible. There is no after - life or other life else where.

Sri Aurobindo says that such materialistic philosophies regard life limited only to this terrestrial world. Hence the pessimism of mortality is the natural outcome of such a world - view. The most a man can do in the light of such a world - view is to make best out of the hidden potentialities of Nature through controlling the natural forces by scientific means and using his scientific discoveries for his own welfare and for the welfare of humanity at large. This may well be, says Sri Aurobindo, the ideal of one's life in the world. But there is another goal possible under this world - view. That goal may be the seeking of his own personal pleasures by every individual, regardless of the pleasures of the others. Thus the egoistic hedonism

can also be the ideal of life of the individual who holds the materialistic view of the world.

(iii) Supraterrestrial or other-worldly
Theory of Existence

Sri Aurobindo asserts

that the holders of this view maintain that this physical world with humanity on the surface of it, is real. But it also holds that this existence of the world and humanity is only a temporary phase after which man's soul which is immortal, has to be transported to another world which is eternal or comparatively more lasting. Sri Aurobindo says that the belief in the immortality of soul, apart from the body, is the keynote of this conception of life.¹

The natural consequence of such a theory is to regard the next world as the true home of man. According to this view the soul, has been infused into human body by the Almighty Creator. After death, Man goes into heaven or hell according to his good or bad actions in this world. About the soul, there may be two views. According to the first, the material body has been created first and the soul has emerged in it just as the butterfly is born in the chrysalis. According to the other view, the soul has a pre-terrestrial

1. Ibid., p. 576.

existence — the fall and re-ascension being two phases of its existence. The world may be held to be only a field for spiritual development or a testing place for qualifying for final ascension. According to an Indian view, re-ascension to enjoy an eternal proximity and communion with God is possible only when the soul has perfected itself through a series of successive births and deaths on this divine play-ground. This view has been regarded by Sri Aurobindo to be rational to some extent and he summarises the main features of this world-view as follows:

- (1) The belief in the individual immortality of the human spirit.
- (2) This world is only a passing phase; man's highest and eternal abode is in some heaven beyond this world.
- (3) The highest Goal of life is the ethical and spiritual development of the individual. The realisation of this goal leads to ascension to the heaven.

Now Sri Aurobindo examines the three above mentioned world-views and concludes that none of them, by itself, offers an integral view of life that may satisfy the whole being of man. For, there are different motives dominating man's personality at different times. Only a synthetic

approach, thinks Sri Aurobindo, can offer the true solution. The one important element of this synthetic view-point, according to him, is the development of the physical and vital life here on earth. Those theories which do away with the practical life on this earth or belittle the importance of our life of terrestrial needs, interests, desires and ideals in the world cannot be accepted as true theories of the goal of human life. There is a natural impulse and a rule to care for the body and to have a sufficient development and satisfaction of the vital and mental aspects of man. For this an active participation in the world is necessary. Sri Aurobindo says that it is the first precondition for man for the attainment of his full manhood.¹ So according to Sri Aurobindo, an Ideal of human life that neglect or belittles the importance of life in the world, is not worthy of being adopted.²

He further says that the maintenance and development of our physical, vital and emotional being is the very foundation of our survival on this earth. Hence a sound and healthy ideal of human life should take into consideration all these facts about our life on the earth, and it should

1. Ibid., p. 579.

2. Ibid., pp. 579 - 580.

aim at an integral development of physical, vital and emotional being of man. Without giving proper place to our life on earth, the Ideal of human life will not be complete nor acceptable, according to Sri Aurobindo.

At the same time, says Sri Aurobindo, Nature has implanted in us something which constantly makes us feel that there is in us something which is superior to this physical world and to all that it contains. This inspiring element in our being is called by Sri Aurobindo as 'Soul' or 'Spirit'. Hence our being cannot for ever remain preoccupied with the fulfilment of our physical, vital and emotional being. So the terrestrial living alone cannot be our ideal of life. A true and complete ideal cannot afford to neglect the spiritual aspect of our being. This spiritual aspect or soul as Sri Aurobindo calls it, is different from and superior to physical body, life and mind. An ordinary man postpones the development of this spiritual urge and aspirations till old age overtakes him; whereas a spiritually minded person strives to develop his celestial (spiritual) nature even at the risk of suppression of the most essential vital needs. This attitude is termed by Sri Aurobindo as 'Supraterrestrial view, and he calls it a 'sick ascetic longing'.¹ According to Sri Aurobindo the actions and

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 804.

efforts of both the ordinary man and the ascetic are deviating from a true and complete Ideal. One lays over-emphasis on earthly life, the other on spiritual life.

Criticising the exclusively spiritual or ascetic approach Sri Aurobindo says that this attitude discourages or rather condemns all sorts of indulgence in worldly affairs and practical life. It regards, 'self-extinction' in the Supreme Self as the highest end. Such an aspirant soul is disgusted with the unreality of the world, the cruelties of the earthly life, the "aimlessness" of the repetition of births in the body.¹ Sri Aurobindo asserts that this ascetic attitude has also been responsible for retarding collective development and has obstructed us from "a noble embrace of the battle and labour of life in the world."²

The ascetic view of life, according to Sri Aurobindo does not attach proper and adequate value to the creation and the will of the Creator. The purpose of the Supreme Spirit, holds Sri Aurobindo, in creating the cosmos has been defeated by the ascetic. The truly illumined individual has to attach equal importance to both the Supreme God and His creation. Sri Aurobindo thinks that this is possible

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part II, p. 581.

2. Ibid., p. 582.

only if we take a synthetic or integrated view of the
Supreme Self of human self and of the cosmos.¹

(iv) The Synthetic or Integral
Theory of Existence

Sri Aurobindo says that the synthetic approach to the Ideal of human life may be termed as "evolutionary synthesis"² as it corresponds to the level of the development of the individual and may be altered later, with further development. In ancient Indian culture, according to Sri Aurobindo, such an evolutionary synthetic 'Ideal' of human life was attempted. It accepted four legitimate motives of human living, — man's vital interests and needs, his desires, his ethical and religious aspiration, his ultimate spiritual aim and destiny. The claims of his vital, physical and emotional being, the claims of his ethical and religious being governed by knowledge of the law of God and Nature and man, and the claims of his spiritual longing for the Beyond for which he seeks satisfaction by an ultimate release from an ignorant mundane existence. These four motives in Sanskrit terminology are described as Kāma, (काम) Artha, (अर्थ) Dharma (धर्म) and Moksha (मोक्ष).³

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part II, p. 583.

2. Ibid., p. 583.

3. Ibid., p. 583.

As we have just said, the above synthesis of the motives is evolutionary in nature. Sri Aurobindo tells us that during Vedic period, these four motives were fulfilled in four evolutionary stages of man's development. They are the following : (1) Brahmacharya (ब्रह्मचर्य) (2) Garhastha (गार्हस्थ्य) (3) Vānprastha (वानप्रस्थ) (4) Sanyās (संन्यास).

The first period comprised of imparting education and the preparation of the future Gārhasṭh (family) life which an individual was to undertake after Brahmacharya stage. The second period or stage that of family life consisted of fulfilling the vital and emotional needs, finance and organisation of the society. There was the fullest realisation of physical, vital and emotional being of man in this stage. All activities of worldly affairs such as political, ethical and religious organisations were undertaken in this stage. Next came the stage of Vānprastha when the urge for spiritual realisation was intense and the husband and wife together would leave their homes and property for their heirs and depart for the forests to seek spiritual realisation. This quest for spirit ultimately resulted in complete renunciation of worldly life and full-time devotion to Supreme Self, resulting in self-dissolution.¹

According to Sri Aurobindo, main defect of the above-mentioned view of life was this that it was not possible for

1. Ibid., p. 583.

all to trace out the whole circle of development in a single short life-time.¹ To overcome this difficulty, the theory of rebirth was invented so that the individual may be able to be fit for a spiritual liberation through a long process of births and rebirths. He says that this Ideal of human life was largely synthetic and it attached the legitimate value to the world. Even then this view of life also collapsed. It led to the greater emphasis on the renunciation of life and thus the importance of vital life, interests and desires and the social significance of religion and ethics was belittled. Sri Aurobindo asserts that this was, in fact, a logical consequence of that world-view, for, it regarded self-extinction (or मोक्ष) as the ultimate goal of life. This view gave no divine significance to the life-fulfilment and hence held it of small account. In such case the escape from life was the only legitimate goal of life. Thus there developed a contradiction, a sense of irreconcilability of the life in the world and spiritual aspirations.²

(v) Sri Aurobindo's
own Position:

After the critical examination of the above-mentioned views regarding the goal of human life, Sri

1. Ibid., p. 583.

2. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960), p. 807.

Aurobindo's own position emerges out automatically. He holds that the world is the unfoldment of the Being, the Supreme Self. Therefore, not the rejection of the world but the transformation of it is the goal placed before us. There should be no contradiction between active participation in life in the world and spiritual yearnings. Human individual is a central instrument of the Divine meant for this transformation of the lower being into the realised divinity of Sachchidananda. We have to spiritualise and supramentalise (to cultivate the characteristics of the supermind) our mental, vital and physical nature through reviving in them the attributes of Sachchidananda. Here he appreciates the terrestrial view (materialistic) also as it fostered the belief in the value and significance of man, society and the physical world at large and the belief in their perfectibility. But, according to him, it was only a one-sided view as it entertained no belief in the infinite possibilities of the development of his soul; thus it limited the scope of its development.¹

Hence Sri Aurobindo says that Mind and Life are not the highest terms of existence but Spirit and spiritual consciousness. Moreover, it is only through spiritual realisation that Mind and Life can attain to their fullest

1. Ibid., pp. 807-808.

development. This spiritual aspect of our being is at once universal and transcendent. According to him, it possesses "a greater instrumentality of knowledge, a fountain of deeper power and will, an unlimited reach and intensity of love and joy and beauty."¹

He further says that Mind, Life and Body are also constantly seeking knowledge, power and joy. Therefore, they are instruments of soul. That is why, they cannot be neglected in the spiritual evolution. If any spiritual theory attempts to do so, it neglects, rather, degrades the Divine manifested here in the cosmos. The supraphysical or other-worldly view of life also diminishes the full value of our presence in the world. According to him, it allows only a restricted "acceptance of life in an earthly body."² Therefore, Sri Aurobindo thinks that a unified, integrated and perfect Ideal of human life can dawn upon us only when we synthesise the three views — supracosmic, terrestrial and supraterrrestrial — into one whole. Only such an Ideal, holds Sri Aurobindo, can illumine the whole truth of our being.³

1. Ibid., p. 808.

2. Ibid., p. 809.

3. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part, II, p. 587.

Now he proceeds on to explain in detail this integral Ideal of human life. He says that under this world-view the supracosmic Reality, i.e. Brahman, is the Supreme Truth of being; "to realise it, is the highest reach of our consciousness."¹ But this Reality has also expressed itself here in the forms of the universe — in the forms of Mind, Life and Matter. These manifested forms are not outside of itself but in its own being. Moreover, these forms are not opposite or contradictory as they seem to us to be. In fact, when these forms are the self-unfoldment and self-expression of the Supreme Spirit, how can they be the opposite of it? Further Sri Aurobindo remarks that these forms of the cosmos are the consequence of a willed action of the Supreme Being. Hence they are not arbitrary nor an act of error, nor are they the creation of our phantasy. Hence, he concludes, "there is a divine significance and truth in it A perfect self-expression of the spirit is the object of our terrestrial existence."²

However, according to Sri Aurobindo, the realisation of the above Ideal of life is not possible if we have not become universal for without any opening into universality the individual remains incomplete.³

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part, II, p. 587.

2. Ibid., p. 587.

3. Ibid., p. 587.

Sri Aurobindo further holds that there is an essential unity of God and soul, or at least, there is a capacity in them for utter oneness. He also maintains that when a soul, through love, union of consciousness and fusion of existence in existence, dissolves itself in the Supreme Self, all is not dissolved completely; there remains something underlying this state of utter "merger of the soul in the Divine unity."¹ Thus according to him, throughout the course of spiritual development, the individuality of the aspirant is never dissolved completely. As a matter of fact, it is, a unit, rather, a centre of all spiritual development. If there is no individuality left, who is to enjoy the fruits of highest spiritual realisation? Though we have to realise, our unity with the other selves in the universe and with the Supreme Spirit, this unity does not mean to Sri Aurobindo the abolition of the individuality of our being. That is why he says that it is through the individual that its evolutionary self - unfolding here comes to its ecme. But all this is not possible unless we suppose not only a real being of the individual, but the revelation of our secret eternal oneness with the Supreme and with all cosmic existence. In his self-integration, says Sri Aurobindo, the soul of the individual must awake to universality and to transcendence.²

1. Ibid., p. 561.

2. Ibid., p. 588.

Thus we see that at no stage of spiritual evolution, Sri Aurobindo preaches the dissolution of the individuality as an ideal state. He makes it a point to emphasise that even after having attained to the state of Nirvana, Buddha continued the life of action.¹ This, in short, is Sri Aurobindo's concept of Ideal of human life. We have to survive as an individual, yet we have to experience our unity with the universe and with the Supreme Spirit, for, we are identical with them in our secret nature.

Further, Sri Aurobindo does not believe that man's spiritual evolution is limited only to this terrestrial world. Besides the physical plane of existence, there are, according to him, other planes of consciousness also to which we can rise and we have already got with those planes some sort of "hidden links".² Complete self - realisation is not possible without the attainment of these planes.³ Thus we can say that the evolutionary possibilities of man extend to the

1. For the similar reason, Iqbal greatly admire the Prophet of Islam for continuing the life of action even after the highest spiritual ascension (Mairaj).

2. Ibid., p. 588. Similarly Iqbal says:

گمان مبرکم همین خاکدان نشیمن ماست

که هر ستاره جهان است یا جهان بودست

(Don't think, this earth is our only abode. For, every star is a world or has been a world).

— Jawed Namah (Preface).

3. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part II, p. 588.

levels of existences beyond the physical one.¹ And hence he upholds the possibility of spiritual ascension and says that it is true that the soul can ascend into worlds of a greater consciousness beyond the earth.²

But at the same time, Sri Aurobindo says (just like Iqbal) that the power of higher consciousness should be realised for the spiritual progress here on earth. In fact, all the prophets of the world have been working for this end.

Sri Aurobindo asserts that our earthly existence is only a veiled and partially manifest form of the Supreme Spirit. We have before us the mission, the Ideal, of fulfilling or unfolding that hidden Spirit explicitly. We and the universe are at present only an imperfect forms of the Spirit. Humanity is also one of these many forms. To leave the humanity as imperfect as it is today, is to limit its divine possibilities. Thus he presents his Ideal before us saying that "We have to bring a wider meaning into our human life and manifest in it the much more that we secretly are."³

In our secret nature, we are Sachchidananda. The real goal of our life is to become Sachchidananda by

1. Ibid., p. 588.

2. Ibid., p. 589.

3. Ibid., p. 589.

cultivating in us His attributes. Thus Sri Aurobindo says that the human soul has to know itself and to "grow into this truth of itself to become one with the Divine Being, to raise its nature to the Divine Nature, its existence into the Divine Existence, its consciousness into the Divine Consciousness, its delight of being into the Divine Delight of Being and to receive all this into its becoming."¹ In short, we have to make our life and soul here upon earth an expression of the highest Truth, i.e., Sachchidananda. In our inner self we have to possess this God and at the same time we are to be possessed and controlled by His Divine Energy.²

Sri Aurobindo further says that our morality will have no sense and meaning unless we are immortal. Our earth can attain to the full realisation of herself only by opening herself to the higher planes of being. Similarly unless we transcend our present limited consciousness and have the experience of our unity with the Supreme Self, we cannot know ourselves and the world rightly. He describes, this experience as living "in the being and power of the Divine and Eternal."³

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1. Ibid., p. 561 Iqbal expresses this truth by quoting a tradition of the Prophet : 'Cultivate in yourself the attributes of God.'
 2. Ibid., p. 561.
 3. Ibid., p. 590.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the very fact of the evolution rampant in this universe through which Mind and Life have emerged in Matter, justifies that the spirit or soul will also emerge in a complete and perfect form out of our secret being. Then only we shall be able to attain to the above maintained Integral or synthetic, Ideal. The involved Sachchidananda is the secret of our being in the cosmos. To evolve Him in our being fully, manifestly and expressedly, is the goal, the Ideal of our existence.

2. IQBAL'S CONCEPT OF THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE

Now we come to deal with the concept of the Ideal of human life as held by Iqbal. As we have said before, according to him, the Ideal of human life is not self-negation but self-affirmation. He strongly criticises those philosophers and mystics, e.g., English Neo-Hegelians and certain class of sufis, who hold the doctrine of self-negation. He thinks that the result of this doctrine has been the tendency of escapism and renunciation of the worldly life. This ascetic attitude of these philosophers and mystics has been responsible, for the backwardness of the East. It has resulted in the loss of power, passivity and inaction.

Iqbal was very much dissatisfied with this state of affairs. He waged a constant war in his writings against

such an Ideal. While discussing religion that identifies itself with passive mystic attitude, he writes, "Religion in this sense is known by the unfortunate name of Mysticism, which is supposed to be a life-denying, fact-avoiding attitude of mind directly opposed to the radically empirical outlook of our times."¹

Iqbal further tells us that the upholders of the doctrine of self-negation regard the finite centres of experience, i.e. individual selves, as unreal. He does not agree with them. According to him these individual selves are real and their reality lies in the continuous creation of desires and ideals. Life asserts itself through these individual centres of experience by overcoming obstacles. The emergence of the senses and intellect in life is like the invention of the tools and instruments for overcoming the obstacles in the way of life and for the preservation and expansion of the individuality or the 'self'. The greatest obstacle in the way of life is Matter or physical Nature. Since these obstacles enable the inner powers of life to unfold themselves, Iqbal does not regard Nature or obstacles put in the way of life by Nature as evil. They are the necessary conditions for realising and strengthening

1. The Reconstruction, p. 181.

the individuality. The upholders of the doctrine of self-negation teach an escape from Nature instead of mastering it for the welfare of the humanity. Explaining the reasons for his criticism of Plato, Iqbal says, "My criticism of Plato is directed against those philosophical systems which hold up death rather than life as their ideal — systems which ignore the greatest obstruction to life, namely, matter and teach us to run away from it instead of absorbing it."¹

As we have seen in the last chapter, Iqbal believes that the doctrines of the illusoriness of the world and self-negation are a matter of political expediency of the subjugated nations to weaken the stronger ones. Iqbal, on the other hand, preaches the doctrine of self-assertion which implies an active resistance against the forces of oppression and injustice. Those who want to escape from life and its activities, regard the dissolution of the 'self' into infinite God as the supreme Ideal of life. If somebody wants to live in this world, he should affirm his self and fulfill it through the cultivation of divine attributes in it. To negate the self is equivalent to death.

Iqbal, in his "Asrar-e-Khudi", explaining his Ideal of self-preservation as against self-negation, narrates, the

1. R.A.Nicholson : The Secrets of the Self, Introduction, pp. xxii - iii.

story of a thirsty bird who saw a glistening diamond and thought it to be water. But as he approached it and tried to drink, he found that it was as hard as stone. For, it had enriched, its being and fortified its 'self'. Being disappointed, that bird proceeded further and saw a dew-drop. It rushed at it at once and drank it up. As the 'self' of the dew-drop was not strong and fortified and it had a very frail being, Iqbal draws the following lesson from this story:-

"Never for an instant neglect self-preservation,
Be a diamond, not a dew-drop.
Save thyself by affirmation of self,
Produce a melody from the string of self;
Make manifest the secrets of self."¹

At another place in the same book, he expresses the same message in a more forceful way, as follows:-

"Do not abandon 'self'. Persist therein.
Be a drop of water and drink up the Ocean!"²
Glowing with the light of self as thou art,
Make self strong, and thou wilt endure.
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1. Ibid., pp. 102-3.

2. I.e., absorption of divine attributes in one's self.

I will tell thee, what is the secret of Life —
 To sink into thyself like the pearl,
 Then to emerge from thine inward solitude;
 To collect sparks beneath the ashes,
 And become a flame and dazzle men's eyes.¹"

As we have seen, Iqbal is a very severe critic of the doctrine of self-negation. He believes that the spirit of the whole teachings of Islam is against this doctrine. He interprets the early mystics of Islam — for whom he has great respect and admiration — in a way so as to represent them in sympathy with his own views. He considers Jalaluddin Rumi as his spiritual guide and teacher and derives inspiration from him in constructing his own philosophy. It may be pointed out here that there is some controversy about the interpretation of Rumi's views. According to R.A. Nicholson, Rumi held the doctrine of self-negation. He further says that Iqbal rejected Rumi's doctrine of self-negation.² But in a detailed survey, Khalifa Abdul Hakim has shown that "all the analogies"³ used by Rumi to illustrate this losing of self, point to the conclusion that what is generally termed

1. Ibid., p. 123.

2. Ibid., Introduction, p. xiv.

3. The oft-used analogies of Rumi are, red-hot iron in the fire, Dimming of the stars or candle in the presence of sun.

They said, 'They are not to be found, we
have sought them long.'

He replied, 'A thing which is not to be
found that is my desire.'¹

Although Iqbal regards Rumi as his spiritual teacher and there is some similarity of views between them, yet there is some difference also in them. In fact, both Rumi and Iqbal have reconciled a kind of pantheism with the practical urges and needs of life. In Rumi, however, there is greater emphasis on the former aspect, while in Iqbal, the latter aspect is more pronounced. One may wonder how the two apparently irreconcilable elements — pantheism and human responsibility — have been reconciled together by them. The answer is simple. Talking of the ultimate transcendental level, one may say that God is all alone and God is the only Reality. But talking of human level, one has to admit that individual human selves are also real. But since God is the only Reality, all else must proceed from God. Whatever reality is possessed by any thing must come

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1. Translation by R.A. Nicholson of the following verses of Rumi which he (Rumi) wrote in the name of his great spiritual guide Shams-e-Tabriz:

ادی شیخ با چراغ همی گشت گرد شهر * کز دام و دد ملولم انسانم آرزوست
زین هموهان سست عناصر دلم گوشت * شیر خدا ورستم دستانم آرزوست
گفتم که یافت می نشود جسته ایم ما
گفت آنکه یافت می نشود آنم آرزوست"

from God. Thus we may consider God as the Supreme Being who is the source of all beings. This is the meaning of their pantheism. Here a question may be raised about the purpose of all this show. Granted that all individual selves receive their reality from God. But what is the ultimate goal of their life. An ordinary pantheist answers this question in the manner of an escapist. He says, "God is the true Reality. Ours is a borrowed reality. Since our self is derived from God, its ultimate object is to merge itself in God. And this can be done through love. But Iqbal and Rumi would say that this individuality has been bestowed on man as a blessing — as a means of attaining moral perfection. We should not throw away this gift of God but should utilise it in fulfilling the purpose of God which is also the ultimate purpose of our life. In other words, we should try to make our individuality more real and more strong through proper action and love. Love of God does not require that we should merge our individuality in the Being of God but we should merge our will in the will of God. In this lies the true progress and self-realisation of man. Again, it may be asked here, when self-negation is alien to the spirit of Islam, whence did it come into the Muslim mysticism? Iqbal attributes it to un-Islamic influences on Muslim mysticism, e.g., Platonism, Vedantism and Buddhism. He is in agreement with Sri Aurobindo in regarding the doctrine of self-negation

as a product of the periods of decadence during which escapism and asceticism are more appealing to man. The same happened with the Muslims after the fall of Baghdad. When the social and political life ceased to satisfy their yearnings, they sought refuge in the philosophy of self-negation and asceticism. According to Iqbal, at no stage of life — even after attaining to the highest spiritual realisation — one is not absolved of his duties towards life and his obligations to humanity. In this connection, he cites the example of the Prophet of Islam, who inspite of his supreme spiritual experience in Mairaj (ascension), chose to return back to this earth and adopt a life of action for the spiritual uplift of the humanity. Iqbal has great admiration for this aspect of the Prophet's life, just as Sri Aurobindo has got for Gautam Buddha who continued to live and work in this world for enlightenment of others even after attaining¹ Nirvana.

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1. The Life Divine, Vol.I, p.63. Though Iqbal is opposed to certain implications of later Buddhism, e.g., extinction of desires and asceticism, he is no less appreciative of the above-mentioned phase of Buddha's life, i.e., his emphasis on action in life. In his 'Jawed Namah', Iqbal puts the following verses in Buddha's mouth:

آن بهشتی که به خدائے بتوبخشده همه هیچ

تا جزائے عمل تست جان چیز هست

* * * * *

راحت جان طلبی راحت جان چیز نیست

در غم هم نفسان اشک روان چیز هست

(Continued on next page)

This brings us to the distinction which Iqbal draws between prophetic and mystic consciousness. He says that the mystic, after attaining unitary experience¹ of God, does not wish to return back from that state. But the prophet does return to his earthly life for the benefit of humanity. So the return of the prophet is most creative and possesses great pragmatic value. After returning from that unitary experience of God, the prophet creates a new world of ideals and thus controls the forces of history. "For the mystic," says Iqbal, "the repose of unitary experience is something final, for the prophet it is the awakening within him, of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world. The desire to see his religious experience transformed into a living world-force is supreme in the prophet."¹ The remarks of a Muslim saint, Abdul Quddus of Gangoh throw light on this truth: "Muhammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned."²

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(The heaven which God bestows upon thee
is worthless.
If it be born of the reward of thy action,
it is something valuable.
* * * * *
Dost thou seek peace of soul,
There is nothing like peace of soul.
To shed tears in the sorrows of the fellow-beings,
is something valuable).

— Jawed Namah, p. 49 Swami
Vivekananda and Rabindranath Tagore have also held that
Buddha did not preach inaction. See, "selections from
Swami Vivekananda", p.37 and Rabindranath Tagore:
"Sadhana", pp. 31-32.

1. The Reconstruction, p. 124.
2. Ibid., p. 124.

Thus we see that the Ideal of human life, according to Iqbal, has no place for the dissolution of the self, or for inaction and asceticism. In this connection, Iqbal refers to the case of Hallaj bin Mansoor, the great martyr - saint who was put to death for saying. "I am the creative Truth" (i.e. God). The contemporaries of Hallaj interpreted these words of his in pantheistic light. According to them, Hallaj denied the transcendental reality of God by asserting himself before God. Iqbal does not subscribe to this view. On the contrary, Iqbal believes that he was the first in asserting the reality and individuality of his self in the face of the Infinite self.¹ Iqbal finds support for this interpretation from Hallaj's own work. He believes that Hallaj's spiritual experience does not signify a drop slipping into sea, "but the realisation and bold affirmation in an undying phrase of the reality and permanence of the human ego in a profounder personality."² Thus we see that, according to Iqbal, the Ideal of human life is not self-negation but self-affirmation. He believes that the self is preserved and made strong through the cultivation of divine attributes in the 'self'. The perfection is measured by the extent of the nearness of the individual to God. An individual who comes nearest to God is the perfect man. However, Iqbal warns

1. The Reconstruction, p. 96.

2. Ibid., p. 96. A similar reference is found in Vedas where Shwetaketu asserts, "I am Brahman" (अहं ब्रह्मास्मि)

us at this point that the closest nearness to God does not mean that the individual is "finally absorbed in God. On the contrary, he absorbs God into himself"¹ as he assimilate attributes. He also absorbs the world of matter into himself through mastering it. Iqbal has substantiated this argument by quoting Jalaluddin Rumi who relates that once the Prophet, Mohammad, when he was a little boy, was lost in the desert. His nurse, Haleema, grief-stricken at this, was roaming in the desert when she heard a voice saying:

"Do not grieve, he will not be lost to thee,
Nay, the whole world will be lost in him."

so Iqbal believes that the true individual cannot be lost in the world; it is the world that is lost in him.²

Iqbal defines Life as a "forward assimilative movement."³ He believes that the life overcomes all obstructions in its march by assimilating them. He further maintains that in mastering obstacles lies the freedom of the 'self'. The fuller freedom is realised by appropriating the most free Individual, i.e., God. So he terms Life as an endeavour for

1. The Secrets of the self, p. xix.
2. Ibid., p. xx.
3. Ibid., pp. xix - xx.

freedom. Iqbal calls the most perfect man as the 'free man' (Mard-e-Hur) as he has mastered the world and is free from the bondage to matter. But freedom here refers to a moral quality. So far as the freedom of will is concerned, Iqbal does not believe that man is absolutely free. According to him, freedom means the realisation of the possibilities of man. The individual is free to the extent to which ~~the~~ realises those possibilities. He is also determined as the limits to his realisation of possibilities is fixed by God. Iqbal's view of the freedom of will is contained in the following tradition of the Prophet of Islam : "The true faith¹ is between predestination and free will."

The 'self' or the personality has been defined by Iqbal as the luminous centre of our life. It is the life - spark beneath our dust.² Again, he says that the personality is "a state of tension."³ The secret of the preservation of

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1. Somewhat similar position is held by Sri Aurobindo. He does not believe in absolute freedom of will. According to him, the idea of absolute freedom "ignores the fact that our natural being is a part of cosmic Nature and our spiritual being exists only by the supreme Transcendence The will of the individual, even when completely free, could not act in an isolated independence, because the individual being and nature are included in the universal Being and Nature and depend on the all-over-ruling Transcendence."

— The Life Divine, Vol.II, Pt.II, pp. 964-65.

2. The secrets of the self, p. 28.
3. Ibid., p. xxi.

the 'self' lies in the preservation of this state of tension. As we have seen before, Iqbal deduces from this fact his standard of good and evil. That which helps maintain this state is good and that which weakens it, is evil. The relaxation is its **enemy**. If the state of tension can be maintained for ever, we shall ¹ become immortal.

An important, rather the most important element in the Ideal of human life as conceived by Iqbal is Love. According to him, Love is a desire to assimilate and absorb. In its highest form, it creates values and ideals and also gives an urge to realise them. Love, says Iqbal, individualises the lover as well as the ²beloved. In Love, there is an urge to assimilate the attributes of the beloved. God is the most perfect Individual. The Love of God inspires the individual to cultivate the attributes of God in himself. This gives nearness to God. And in nearness to God lies human perfection. Thus Love of God may be interpreted as an urge for perfection.

Iqbal regards the Prophet of Islam as the highest embodiment of human perfection, known to history. Moreover, his life is before us as a concrete model. The perfection of God is somewhat abstract for us as God is invisible. But we

1. Ibid., p. xxi.

2. Ibid., pp. xxv - xxvi.

know the Prophet of Islam as a historical man. Our love of perfection finds a concrete model in the Prophet's life and character. So the Love of the Prophet is equivalent to Love of God, according to Iqbal.

Iqbal further tells us that the self can be preserved and made more lasting by Love. It is fortified by the Love against its possible dissolution on death.¹ He also tells us that the self is weakened^{by} asking anything from others. Here he refers to an incident from the life of the caliph Omar, who while riding a camel dropped his whip and did not like to ask anybody to lift it up. So Iqbal says that everybody should avoid taking obligations from others. For, the asking disintegrates the self and makes divine illuminations impossible.²

Iqbal believes that the self, when strengthened by Love, dominates and controls the outward and inward forces of the universe.³

1. Ibid., pp. xxv.

2. From this fundamental truth, Iqbal, like Mahatma Gandhi derives his political doctrine of abstaining from foreign goods, as far as possible. In his Bal-e-Jibril, he says:

اثمانہ شیشہ گران فرنگ کا احسان * سفال ہند سے مینا و جام پیدا کر

(Do not take the obligation of the English glass-makers. Produce the wine-flask and the cup from the clay of India).

3. The Secrets of the Self, p. 43.

Now let us see, how Iqbal explains the Islamic concept of salvation as it will throw light on his own concept of the Ideal of human life. According to Iqbal, the self or ego is "the unity of human consciousness which constitutes the centre of human personality."¹ The Quran holds that the self or individuality of each man is a divine gift to him. In Islamic conception of salvation, this individuality is never to be lost. The Quran says about the human selves, "each of them shall come to Him on the day of Resurrection as a single individual."²

That is why Iqbal thinks that the final fate of man is not the loss of individuality. The Quran does not regard the complete liberation from the self-hood as the highest state of human bliss. Every man has to fortify his self and has to make progress as an individual distinguished from all the rest. On the authority of the Quran, he says that even on the day of universal destruction there would be some persons whose selves would remain in tact.³ These persons would be the persons in whom the ego, has reached the very highest point of intensity.⁴ Thus the highest state of this

1. The Reconstruction, pp. 95-96.

2. The Quran, 19 : 95-96.

3. The Reconstruction, p. 117.

4. Ibid., p. 117.

salvation is the complete self-preservation even in the presence of God. And this is actually the ideal concept of salvation, according to Iqbal. He believes this state was reached by the Prophet of Islam when he ascended to high heavens and could see God face to face. The Quran, describing this experience, says "his eye turned not aside, nor did it wander."¹ Iqbal considers a Persian verse as the best expression of this ideal of perfect selfhood in Islam. The said verse runs thus:

موسى ز هوش رفت بیک جلوه صفات
تو عین ذات می نگوی و در تبسمی

'Moses fainted away by a mere surface illumination
of Reality : Thou seest the very substance of
Reality with a smile.'²

This verse emphasizes the separate existence or individuality of human self as distinguished from God.

According to Iqbal, the pantheistic Sufism does not accept this view. It fails to understand how the Infinite Self and the finite self can mutually exclude each other. Iqbal answers this objection by asserting that the meaning

1. The Quran, 53 : 17.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 118. The episode relates to the prophet, Moses, who insisted to see God face to face but fainted at an indirect manifestation of Divine attributes in the form of dazzling light.

of true infinity is not the infinite extension. God's infinity consists in infinite intensity and not in infinite extensity. So the finite selves can remain as distinct from the Infinite Self. But it does not mean that they are quite unrelated to the Infinite. Iqbal explains this truth in the following way : If we look at the matter from the point of view of extension, we are absorbed by the spatio-temporal order to which we belong. If we consider ourselves intensively, the spatio-temporal order does not absorb us and we can remain as distinct from the spatio-temporal order. Thus, we retain our identity even in the presence of God Who may be taken as the ultimate Reality behind this spatio-temporal order. Iqbal further says that though we are distinct from God, yet we are intimately related to Him, for, we depend on Him for life and ¹subtenance.

From the fact that the ultimate essence of human life, i.e., self is derived from God and from the fact of its separate and distinct reality, Iqbal draws the conclusion that human self is immortal and possesses infinite possibilities of progress which continues even after death. This brings us to the discussion about the problem of immortality. Let us see, at some length, what are the views of Iqbal and Sri Aurobindo regarding this problem.

1. The Reconstruction, p. 118.

3. IMMORTALITY:

According to Iqbal, the problem of immortality is closely related to the problem of Time. He believes that the conception of Time as a spatialised line is an adulterated time. Because we wrongly conceive Time as an already drawn line divided into past, present and future, we have difficulty in overcoming this time. Actually this time is spatialised and serial time devised by the human self itself for the purpose of dealing effectively with the practical needs of our life in the world. "Spatialised time", says Iqbal, "is a fetter which life has forged for itself in order to assimilate the present environment."¹ From this discussion one thing is very clear. For Iqbal, immortality does not mean man's infinite persistence in life on this spatialised line of time which we may measure in terms of days, months and years.

However, the real Time, according to Iqbal, is represented by the life itself. "Real time is life itself."² It is not something external. It flows with the life. Pure time has no length. On the basis of this conception of time, he concludes, "In reality, we are timeless, and it is possible

1. The Secrets of the Self, Introduction, p. xxv.

2. Ibid., p. xxv.

to realise our timelessness even in this life. This revelation, however, can be momentary only.¹

Iqbal mention certain views of immortality which he considers inadequate. First, he discusses the concept of collective immortality. Ibn-e-Rushd's conception of immortality implies collective immortality. For, he regards intelligence (Active Intellect in man) as belonging to a different order of being. According to him, it transcends individuality and hence is one, universal and eternal. Iqbal finds an echo of Ibn-e-Rushd's theory in William James who suggests "a transcendental mechanism of consciousness which operates on a physical medium for a while, and then gives it up in pure sport."² Hence Iqbal thinks that Ibn-e-Rushd's eternal unity of Intellect may only mean the immortality of humanity and civilization. At any rate, it does not mean the immortality of each individual soul. So Ibn Rushd's conception of immortality is not acceptable to Iqbal.

Iqbal regards Nietzsche's doctrine of Eternal Recurrence as a positive view of immortality. Iqbal says that according to Nietzsche, the space is merely subjective and the time is not a subjective form. It is real and is an

1. The secrets of the self, Introduction, p. xxv.

2. The Reconstruction, p. 112.

infinite process. Moreover, Nietzsche believes that the quantity of energy in the universe is constant and consequently finite. "The centres of this energy", writes Iqbal, "are limited in number, and their combination perfectly calculable. There is no beginning or end of this ever-active energy, no equilibrium, no first or last change. Since time is infinite, therefore, all possible combinations of energy-centres have already been exhausted. There is no new happening in the universe; whatever happens now has happened before an infinite number of times, and will continue to happen an infinite number of times in the future a combination of energy-centres which has once taken place must always return; otherwise there would be no guarantee for the return even of the superman.¹"

Now criticising this concept of immortality, Iqbal says that it is "only a more rigid kind of mechanism" as the same energy-centres repeat themselves again and again. According to this view, time becomes a perpetual circular movement and hence this kind of immortality will be absolutely intolerable. And if we somehow tolerate it on Nietzsche's assurance that there will emerge superman during the repetition of these energy-centres, the individual soul gets no profit from the emergence of superman. For, the superman has

1. The Reconstructions, pp. 114-15.

born
 been/before infinite number of times and in future also his
 birth is inevitable. Therefore, this view of immortality
 is also rejected by Iqbal.¹

Iqbal also mentions Kant's view of immortality. This view furnishes us with the belief that each individual's self survives after death.~~immortality~~. Iqbal says that Kant's argument for immortality is mainly ethical. We find that the virtue and happiness remain as two mutually excluding heterogeneous notions in the world. Therefore, Kant supposes the existence of God and the immortality of soul to ensure the attendance of happiness on virtue in the world hereafter. These two postulates make morality practicable as man believes that in the life after death, God will bring about a confluence of virtue and happiness. Now examining this theory critically, Iqbal thinks that if we view this theory strictly on rational basis, we fail to understand "why the consummation of virtue and happiness should take infinite time and how God can effectuate the confluence between mutually exclusive notions."² Therefore, he does not agree with this view also. However, as this view implies personal immortality, it is very close to Iqbal's own position.

1. The Reconstructions, p. 115.

2. Ibid., p. 112.

Thus we come to deal with Iqbal's own conception of immortality. Iqbal believes in Personal Immortality just like Kant. But Iqbal differs from Kant with regard to the source of this belief. For Kant, the belief in immortality is a postulate of practical reason. Iqbal, as we have already seen, criticises Kant on the ground that he fails to prove it as a rational necessity. His own view of immortality, however, is based on Intuition. It is the direct intuition of the real self that gives one the conviction of immortality, according to Iqbal. We have said above that Iqbal believes in personal immortality but does not take it to mean perpetual persistence in serial time. His argument in favour of personal immortality proceeds on the belief that life offers a scope for the activity of the ego. He divides actions into two categories — ego-sustaining and ego-dissolving acts. He does not accept the division of action into pleasure-giving and pain-giving acts. The ego-sustaining acts are those acts which help maintain the state of tension on which depends the survival of our personality. There is one more quality of the ego-sustaining acts. Such acts are marked by the "respect for the ego in myself as well as in others."¹ When this two-fold quality is present in the action, it makes our self strong and fortified against a possible/ For,

1. The Reconstructions, p. 119.

death, according to Iqbal, is the first test of the ego as to how much it has fortified itself. He believes that if the present action has sufficiently fortified the ego against the shock that physical dissolution brings, death will only be a kind of passage to the state of Barzakh,¹ as described in the Quran. Barzakh is a state^{of} interval² or relaxation. From this discussion, Iqbal conclude, "Only those egos will survive this state of relaxation who have taken good care during the present life."³ It, obviously, means that those egos who have not fortified themselves through maintaining a state of tension and through moral excellence will not survive this state of relaxation.

The state of tension, according to Iqbal, is the very essence of individuality. It is this state of tension which is a necessary condition of immortality. If we interpret it in the light of Iqbal's various poetical writings, we have reasons to believe that this state of tension has close connection with the moral or practical urge of the ego and its freedom and responsibility. In terms borrowed from Existentialism, we may say that only authentically existing ethical individuals are qualified for immortality — those on whom

1. Ibid., p. 119.

2. The Secret of the Self, Introduction, p. xxiv.

3. Ibid., p. xxiv.

the realisation of their freedom and responsibility has dawned and who are in a perpetual state of tension to choose their existence. From the mystic point of view, Iqbal would explain this state as arising on account of the realisation of the true and timeless nature of the self — the realisation our self has a higher destiny and its goal consists in assimilating Divine attributes and not in being a slave to Matter. Iqbal believes that it is this realisation that makes us truly immortal.

Thus we see that according to Iqbal, personal immortality is not ours as of right; we can have it only if we make an effort for its realisation. "Man is only a candidate for it."¹ The persons in whom the ego has reached the highest point of intensity, will not be affected even on the day of 'universal Destruction.'²

The fortified egos will not be dissolved even by the shock of death and will survive the state of relaxation (Barzakh) and will win their resurrection. According to Iqbal, resurrection is "a consummation of a life process within the ego it is nothing more than a kind of stock-taking of the ego's past achievements and his future possibilities. The

1. The Reconstruction, p. 119.

2. Ibid., p. 117.

Quran argues the phenomenon of re-emergence of the ego on the analogy of his first emergence.¹ The Quran says, "Man saith : 'What! After I am dead, shall I in the end be brought forth alive?' Doth not man bear in mind that We made him at first when he was nought?" (19 : 67-8). The Quran further says. "Yet are We not thereby hindered from replacing you with others your likes, or from producing you in a form which ye know not! Ye have known the first creation: will you not reflect?" (56 : 60-2).

Let us, now, see Sri Aurobindo's views regarding immortality. In explaining his views on immortality, he starts with the assertion that our individual self has been derived from the Supreme Self. The realisation of this truth of our being is the first step towards immortality. The second step is the realisation of the fact that there are selves in the world besides our own self through which the same ultimate Reality is manifesting itself. So our self is only a small part of the Supreme Self. The individual comes to lose the separatistic egoism which produces differentiations amidst the manifestations of one and the same Reality. The walls of discords and distinctions which destroy the concept of human unity are thus demolished.²

1. Ibid., p. 120.

2. The Life Divine, Vol.II, part II, p. 615.

Now Sri Aurobindo tells us that there are two kinds of ignorance which are a hinderance in the way of Immortality. First, we take time as serial — from instant to instant, from moment to moment. Secondly, we wrongly suppose the span of our life limited to a single birth and death. Both these kinds of ignorance are the result of our greater preoccupation with the material world. According to Sri Aurobindo, the cure of both these kinds of ignorance lies in the belief in Immortality. He says that it is only this belief that can make us rise above the identity with the body and our preoccupation with the material world.² This is possible only when we come to believe in our perpetual persistence in time,³ and regard time as 'Duration' — a continuous flow of time incapable of division into past, present and future, Sri Aurobindo says that we are immortal because our spirit is free and beyond serial time, "beyond the whole succession of physical births and deaths through which we pass the spirit's timeless existence is the true immortality."⁴

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, pt. II, p. 615.

2. Ibid., p. 676. Similarly Iqbal says:

تیری نجات غم مرگ سے نہیں ممکن * کہہ تو خودی کو سمجھتا ہے پیکر خاکی

(Thy liberation from the pangs of death is not possible. For, thou understandst 'self' as identical with physical body).

———— Zarb-e-Kalim, p. 6.

3. Ibid., p. 677.

4. Ibid., p. 677.

Sri Aurobindo describes two notions of immortality :

(1) Timeless Immortality and (2) Time - Immortality. According to the first view, the changeless Spirit within us is recognised as the fundamental Reality free from the chain of many births and rebirths. The second view of immortality upholds the perpetual survival of each individual soul, remaining one and the same after passing through a series of births and rebirths in temporal and spatial manifestation.

Sri Aurobindo tries to reconcile both kinds of Immortality and takes an integral view. He says that by the realisation of the first kind of Immortality (i.e. Timeless Immortality), man becomes free from the succession of many births and deaths. In fact, it has been the supreme goal of so many Indian disciplines. When this first realisation of Timeless Immortality is combined with the realisation of Time-Immortality, we are able to have new experiences of our spirit's free journey in time-eternity without any rigorous subjection to the law of Karma. Thus according to Sri Aurobindo, death is not the end of our being. The fact of survival ^{marks} after death, in some form or other, /the beginning of our spirit's second kind of experience (or we may say, second type of life).¹

1. Iqbal puts the same truth in an Urdu verse in his 'Bang-e-Dara':-

موت تجدید مذاق زندگی کا نام ہے
خواب کے پردے میں بیداری کا اک پیغام ہے

(Continued on next page)

It is Sri Aurobindo's firm belief that as a result of our ascent to the heights of spirit, our true individuality is never annihilated. It is only the false and separatist ego which is abolished and dissolved in the vastness of the spirit. Separatist ego is the result of the limitations born of ignorance. When those limitations disappear as a result of spiritual ascent, limitation - infested ego also disappears. But the true individuality always survives.

Our false separatist ego which is self-centred is dissolved in an experience of identity with the Self of all the selves. It is also possible that this ego may also separate itself from its body in the cosmos and merge itself into the nothingness of the Infinite and Ineffable Self. However, this disappearance of the ego, according to Sri Aurobindo, does not bring with it the destruction of our true individuality. Because our true individuality is one with the Transcendent Being.¹ When the above realisation comes to us, we are freed from the limitations of ignorance and see ourselves as "timeless immutable self possessing itself in² cosmos and beyond cosmos."

(Continued from previous page)

(Death is the name of the revival of the fondness of the life. It is a message of awakening in the guise of sleep).

1. Ibid., p. 680.

2. Ibid., p. 680.

We have discussed the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal with regard to immortality. There are several fundamental points of similarity between the views of the two philosophers. Both of them are convinced that the true immortality is not to be understood in the context of serial time. Both believe that our preoccupation with the physical body or dependence on matter is a hinderance in the realisation of immortality. Both of them believe that our true self is timeless and has its reality in pure duration. According to both of them, immortality has a reference to this timeless self. The very realisation that we have an immortal self which is derived from God and acting upto this realisation makes us immortal. In other words, immortality is earned through action out of respect for the immortal self in us and in others. Thus both of them believe that our individuality is not annihilated by death but survives death. But this survival comes as a reward to those who have fortified their individuality in their life-time.

However, both of them agree that in attaining immortality, one becomes free from the fetters of the serial time and this state is possible even in this life though momentarily. This is illustrated by Iqbal's idea of Mard-e-Hur (the free individual) and Sri Aurobindo's idea of the liberated soul. Moreover, both of them agree that the less fortunate ones — those who have not yet fully qualified themselves

for true immortality — may be so qualified after some time. For Sri Aurobindo, this time may come at some stage in the chain of births and rebirths and for Iqbal, it may come after passing through the purgatory, i.e., Hell. For, he does not believe in the eternal demnation of the souls in the Hell.

We further see that the concept of immortality which has been referred to by Sri Aurobindo under the head of Timeless Immortality is somewhat similar to what Iqbal describes as the collective immortality implied by Ibn-Rushd's view of immortality. Just like Iqbal, Sri Aurobindo also considers such a view of collective immortality as inadequate. He synthesises this view with his view of personal immortality which he terms as Time - Immortality. Again, both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are one in believing that the individual who realises his self to be a part of the Absolute Reality, becomes immortal and free from the bondage to the material conditions. Such liberated souls enter the next life with perfect freedom.

4. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF AND SELF-ASSERTION

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regard the Ultimate Reality as a 'self' and the rest of the beings also as 'selves' — which are real, for, they have been derived from the Supreme Self. Both consider the true

knowledge of the self which also includes the knowledge of the Supreme Self and its close relation with the human self, as essential for the realisation of the Ideal of human life. In fact, the Ideal of human life cannot be truly grasped and understood without this knowledge.

Sri Aurobindo maintains that the evolution of the human self on the spiritual path is possible through the knowledge of one's own self. So he believes in "self-expression by self-finding."¹ In fact, self-recovery or self-finding is the principle which has been adopted by the involved Supreme Spirit in its self-manifestation.²

Sri Aurobindo further holds that the present imperfect nature of humanity gives us a ray of hope, for, imperfection admits the possibility of development. Our present state of humanity is in a transitional stage. The fact that partial consciousness has emerged in Matter, gives us an assurance of the evolution of complete consciousness. The Nature itself inspired by Divine Will is seeking a perfected and divinised life.³ This seeking is rewarded by self-manifestation.

1. The Life Divine, Vol.II, pt. II, p. 590.

2. Ibid., p. 590.

3. Ibid., p. 590.

He tells us that besides self-unfoldment, some persons have also adopted the method of "withdrawal into the supreme peace or ecstasy, a withdrawal into the bliss of the Divine Presence,"¹ for, there are many ways of reaching the Infinite. But Sri Aurobindo does not regard this method of withdrawal of escape in tune with the fundamental aim of manifestation of ultimate Reality here in the world of becoming. He says that if the withdrawal was the proper method, "an evolutionary progression would not have been undertaken."² As the scheme of things is such that it exhibits a constant evolutionary progression, the legitimate goal of life can only be the self-fulfilment here upon earth. The explicit self-unfoldment of the involved Sachchidananda in the becomings of this earth is the aim of the world - existence. The highest Ideal is to help in this process of progressive manifestation of the Supreme Spirit through making explicit the hidden divine attributes.³

Thus we see that the real solution of the problems regarding the goal of world-existence can be found only when our soul starts regarding its essence as Being and at the same time possessing the Becoming. That is to say, our soul,

1. The Life Divine, (Pondy, 1960), p. 812.

2. Ibid., p. 813.

3. Ibid., p. 813.

having known itself as Infinite and Timeless, should also accept this Becoming as Infinite manifested into finite forms and Timeless expressed in temporal mutable forms. So it is necessary for man to realise that this temporal becoming of the universe is nothing other than the "fulfilment of the Being in its dynamic reality."¹ The conception of God as supracosmic Absolute should also be supplemented by his immanent aspect (i.e. universe) "for it alone gives a full spiritual significance to the universe and justifies the soul in manifestation."² This conception of the ideal of human life furnishes us with the complete and the true view of the goal of our existence.

According to Sri Aurobindo the Being is one, but it is also infinite and contains infinite plurality of its manifested forms in a potential way. God is All-existence. The oneness of God is one aspect of God; the Multiplicity is the other aspect of God on which the manifestation of the cosmos depends.

With the multiplicity of Becoming our Ignorance erects an artificial wall between God (the Being) and the manifested Many. The individuals forget, by virtue of this ignorance,

1. The Life Divine, Vol.II, pt. II, p. 557.

2. Ibid., p. 557.

that they are essentially parts of the Eternal self-existent Oneness. This self-existent Oneness is actually the very basis of individual selves and they are supported and held into being only by it. Our inner soul knows in its intimate moments that it has got a unity with God and that it has to realise this unity consciously and come out of the Ignorance of separateness and distinctness from Him. Even Nature is urging the soul to attain to this realisation. This unity of the soul with God when attained, will also promote a unity with all other individual beings and the whole universe as they too are the manifested forms of that one God.

Thus, according to Sri Aurobindo, there are three aspects of an individual's knowledge:-

- (i) It has to become conscious of itself in the universe.
- (ii) It has to become conscious of its unity and identity with the rest of the cosmos.
- (iii) It has to "become aware of his supracosmic transcendence."¹

The realisation of this triple aspect of knowledge is a necessary constituent of our goal of life.

1. Ibid., p. 559.

Sri Aurobindo has established the existence of the individuality as real on the evidence of man's own instincts and aspirations. According to Aurobindo, when a man negates his individuality and denies its reality, "his heart, his will, the strongest and intensest parts of his being remain without a meaning, void of purpose or justification, or become merely a random foolishness agitating itself like a vain and restless shadow against the eternal repose of the pure Existence or amidst the eternal inconscience of the universe."¹

Thus Sri Aurobindo believes that in the spiritual evolution of man the first step is "to affirm, to make distinct and rich, to possess firmly, powerfully and completely his own individuality."² Hence in the beginning, man has to occupy himself mainly with his own ego. During this egoistic phase of his evolution, the world and others and even God is less important than his own self. He values them so far as they are helpful in his own self-affirmation.³ However, this egoistic development is by no means an evil one. Sri Aurobindo is very emphatic on this point. He says; "This primary egoistic development with all its sins and violences and crudities is by no means to be regarded, in its proper place, as

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, Part, II, p. 602.

2. Ibid., p. 605.

3. Ibid., p. 605.

an evil or an error of Nature; it is necessary for man's first work, the finding of his own individuality Man, the individual has to affirm, to distinguish his personality against Nature, to be powerfully himself, to evolve all his human capacities of force and knowledge and enjoyment so that he may turn them upon her and upon the world with more and more mastery and force; his self-discriminating egoism is given him as a means for this primary purpose. Until he has thus developed his individuality, his personality, his separate capacity, he cannot be fit for the greater work before him or successfully turn his faculties to higher, larger and more divine ends.¹

It may be added here that according to Sri Aurobindo, the life of fortified individuality is not the highest stage of our being, although it is necessary for the effective action in practical life.² A life, howsoever developed from

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1. Ibid., pp. 605-606. Here we find a strong corroboration of the truth contained in a verse of Iqbal:

خودی کو کر بلند اتنا کہ ہر تقدیر سے پہلے * خدا بندے سے خود پوچھے بتا تیری رضا کیا ہے

(Enraise your ego so high that before fashioning your destiny, God, Himself may ask you : What is your wish?)

— Bal-e-Jibril, p. 81.

2. Similarly Iqbal says:

بنایا عشق نہ دریائے نا پیدا کران مجھ کو * یہ میری خود نگہداری مرا ساحل نہ بن جائے

(The Love has made me a boundless sea. But there is a danger lest my preoccupation with my 'self' should become my limitation.)

— Bal-e-Jibril, p. 13.

the point of view of individuality, is not to be valued if it does not provide scope for the development of the soul and if it does not prove to be a means for the fulfilment of the progressing soul or the embodied Supreme Spirit.

If man has not got a sufficiently fortified individuality, according to Sri Aurobindo, he cannot attain to the oneness with all without sacrificing the fulfilment of his own mind and soul. He further says that if the individual dissolves his ego into the collectivity, the collectivity may become strong and dominant but the plasticity and the evolution of the society will greatly be hampered. Hence he concludes that the great evolutionary epochs of humanity have taken place in only those societies where the individuals had become active mentally, vitally and spiritually.¹ Sri Aurobindo thinks that the Nature has invented the instrument of ego to enable man to disengage himself from the "incons-
cience or subconscious of the mass and become an independent living mind, life-power, soul, spirit, co-ordinating himself with the world around him but not drowned in it."² Sri Aurobindo regards the development of individuality as the essential pre-condition for spiritual realisation. He says

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, pt. II, p. 609.

2. Ibid., pp. 609-10.

that man has to find himself as the mental and vital ego before he can find himself as the soul or spirit.¹

However, according to him, the development of the egoistic individuality is only a stage which is to be by-passed for the higher aim of soul's realisation. The achievements of egoistic individuality have been regarded by Sri Aurobindo as the fulfilment of man's mind-ego, life-ego and the body-ego. The development of this part of man's being is essential for the practical life in the world. However, the soul, the real, man, remains as yet unfulfilled.

Hence the individual goes on enriching the knowledge of his own self through the attainment of the knowledge of the Nature and God. This marks his progress towards the realisation of his supreme goal of his life.² When the effort of knowing is directed towards the Nature and Universe, the individual attains mastery over the external world. If it is directed towards God, the individual attains to spiritual heights and yet has mastery over the forces of Nature.

However, it is also possible that the individual after attaining to the knowledge of God, may develop a tendency to seek salvation in some heavens beyond, or else may seek to

1. Ibid., p. 610.

2. Ibid., p. 611.

dissolve himself in a Supreme Self or in Supreme Non-Self
 ——— beautifude or Nirvana.¹ But according to Sri Aurobindo,
 even after the dissolution of individuality in the Supreme
 Self, the individual personality of the man is not abolished
 altogether. On the contrary, it survives all the above
 mentioned stages. For, Sri Aurobindo's argument is that it
 is the individual who is seeking his self - development throu-
 ghout.² Moreover, as the separative ego of the individual is
 the secret centre of the workings of the eternal Individual,³
 the Purush, it should justly be preserved.

Because in each individual, there resides One Spiritual
 Person, the perfection or Salvation will always be individual
 rather than collective. As a matter of fact, the salvation
 of the Collectivity also can come only through the individuals
 constituting it. Sri Aurobindo maintains that in what we call
 self-extinction or Nirvana, i.e., self-offering, the individual
 achieves his perfect self-finding. Thus the more an individual
 gives his own self to God, the more he affirms his own
 individuality.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 611.

2. Ibid., p. 611.

3. Ibid., p. 612.

4. Ibid., p. 612.

No doubt, in the abolition of the physical, vital, mental and spiritual ego, man becomes identified with Brahman, the Absolute. But it is emphasised here by Sri Aurobindo that the man or individual on dissolution has to realise and regard itself as an "eternal unit" of the vast all-comprehending unity of Brahman. Thus even in self-extinction the individual ego is not abolished altogether. Transcend it we must, but we cannot get rid of it.

Thus the individual has to acknowledge that it is the same self which is pervading in him and in every thing else. Sri Aurobindo asks how one can deny or abolish altogether the abiding unit in oneself which has come from or which is a part of the all-comprehending unity of the Supreme Self. That is why it is said that to discover one's own self is to discover God. Hence what is dissolved or disappears is not our individuality but the falsehood which reeparates us from all the rest of beings and God.

Let us now see Iqbal's views regarding the knowledge of the self and its significance for the Ideal of human life. Just like Sri Aurobindo, Iqbal too holds his concept of the Ideal of human life as based on his concept of the 'self' and its relation to the Supreme Self or God. Iqbal firmly believes in the reality of the human ego or self. The essential nature of this self or ego is practical — it

wants to assert itself and to develop itself. For determining the path of its development and its destiny, the true knowledge of the 'self' is necessary. This knowledge is obtained through Intuition which tells us that human self is derived from God and that God is the true reality behind it. However, Iqbal is most emphatic in regarding both the human self and the supreme Self as distinct and real.

Thus, according to Iqbal, our individual self has been derived from the supreme self and hence it is also real. It has a separate individuality distinct from the individuality of God. To discover this individuality and to affirm, to presume and to fulfill it, is precisely the ideal of man as conceived by Iqbal. It can be said that to know this 'self' of ours is the first necessity of all spiritual evolution. As apposed to the doctrine of self-negation Iqbal's ideal consists in self-finding and self-affirmation. He finds support for this belief from a famous saying of the Prophet of Islam, viz., One who knows himself knows God. This idea finds expression in Iqbal's poetry also. In his 'Payam-e-Mashriq', he says "Whom do you seek? Why are you restless? For, He (whom you seek) is manifest while, you yourself are under the veil. If you seek Him, you would not see anything but yourself. If you seek yourself, you would find nothing but Him."¹

1.

کرا جوئی چرا در پیج و تابی * کہہ او پیدا است توزیر نقابی
تلاش او کنی جز خود نہ بینی * تلاش خود کنی جز او نیابی
p. 51.

However, Iqbal is cautious enough to tell us that the preoccupation of the individual with his own self should not be permanent. We have to find our self by delving deep into it but then we have to come out of it to take active part in the affairs of the world. In his 'Bal-e-Jibril' he says that the spiritually developed individuals do take plunge into their 'self' and yet they come out of it. But this re-emergence¹ is not possible for ordinary persons.

When we have known ourselves and God we also come to realise that it is the same God which is manifested in the selves of others also. For, He is the Supreme Self and the selves of all others are derived from Him. Hence we should equally honour the 'self' in others as we do in ourselves. This realisation furnishes us with a humanitarian outlook to strive for the welfare of all humanity and to have a sense of oneness with the whole of mankind. So we can say, it is true knowledge about ourselves, about other selves and the Supreme self which makes us understand the true ideal of our life. The materialism cannot give us this ideal or at least the firm faith in this ideal. The knowledge of God provides us with a purpose in all that we strive for and in

1.

خودی میں ڈوبتے ہیں پھر ابھر بھی آتے ہیں
مگر یہ حوصلہ مرد چھوٹ کر رہ گیا نہیں

p. 66.

all that we see manifested here. In this way, the evolution also becomes purposive, its final destination being God Himself.

Iqbal believes that while there is no contradiction between knowledge and Love or Intuition, knowledge divorced from Love leads us astray and makes us slave of the material world. But the true knowledge raises us above the chain of causality and makes us truly free. That is why, Iqbal stands for the synthesis of intellectual knowledge with the intuitive knowledge. Intellect alone cannot give us true knowledge.

However, as we have seen before, Iqbal is not opposed to Intellect. In fact, the knowledge of the empirical world is acquired exclusively through Intellect. Even the Quran encourages the empirical study of the natural phenomena of the world as they reveal the signs of God. We cannot understand the world without Intellect. Iqbal welcomes intellect in so far as it gives the scientific knowledge of this world. But he is conscious of the limitations of Intellect. The Intellect fails so far as the knowledge of God is concerned. Moreover, it cannot tell us anything about the ultimate purpose and goal of human life. The Intellect leads only to doubts regarding these truths. Even the knowledge of our self is not furnished by the Intellect.

It is here that Intuition comes to our rescue. Intuition gives us faith in the reality of our own self, the Supreme Self and the universe. This faith is essential for action in this world. Thus there is no contradiction between Intellect and Intuition. In fact, for a sound concept of the Ideal of human life, the synthesis of both the Intellect and Intuition is imperative.

Thus we see that both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal lay great emphasis on the knowledge of the human self. Having known our self in the true perspective, we can know the Supreme Self and the universe in the true sense. This truth, as a matter of fact, follows from the fact that our selves are derived from the supreme self and thus, are related with that very closely. We have also seen that as both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal regard our individual selves as distinct and real, they both do not see any evil in the self-assertion. On the contrary, both of them justify self-assertion.

5. THE CONCEPT OF PERFECT MAN

When we have realised, according to Sri Aurobindo, an identity and unity with all the other selves manifested here in cosmos and with the Supreme Self, we will be able to discover divine in the world. After we have attained this self-discovery, our wrong actions, errors,

falsehood confusions and discords born of our ignorance of ourselves will disappear and we will find everywhere the true, unalloyed and unveiled manifestation of the Divine Existence, Divine Consciousness - Force and Divine Anand. This divinisation of our life and cosmos will help establish the Divine Life of harmony, unity, happiness, peace, Light and justice here upon earth.¹ Thus Sri Aurobindo says : "The conscious unity of the three, God, soul and Nature, in his own consciousness is the sure foundation of his perfection and his realisation of all harmonies."²

The first stage towards the realisation of the above-mentioned Ideal is, according to Sri Aurobindo, the emergence of religiosity in man. Under this attitude, man seeks help from above to fulfil his moral, vital and physical ideals. But this attitude is not yet a spiritual one. The beginning of spiritual progress is marked by a spiritualisation of our natural activities.³ Then comes an awareness of guidance or communion from above in us. This moulds our actions in the direction of a higher goal. The fruition of this progress comes into existence in the personality of spiritualised sage, the seer, the prophet, the servant of

1. The Life Divine, Vol. II, pt. II, p. 682.

2. Ibid., pp. 620-21.

3. Ibid., pp. 896.

God. The person in the last stage of spiritual evolution is also given higher spiritual energy by God to carry on a "God - given work or mission, the service of some divine power, idea or ideal."¹ Evidently the characteristic quality of such a man is that though he has realised his spirit, has entered the cosmic consciousness and has attained the union with the Supreme Self, yet he embraces the life of action.² Neither he renounces the world, nor does he try to escape from this world. For, he has to do God's work here upon earth and show the path of salvation to others also. Sri Aurobindo holds that the liberated individual should not seek refuge in some heavens beyond.³ He has to live in the society and transform and divinise the lower being. Aurobindo's conviction is that it is possible only when we have attained to the Supramental level of consciousness (i.e. Supermanhood). Sri Aurobindo's perfect and ideal man is Superman. In the beginning, the status of supermanhood would be realised only by a few persons. Afterwards, the attainment to the level of Superman would be open to the whole human race. In Nature, there is a call to all to achieve this highest end. Sri Aurobindo believes that the emergence of superman would mark

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1. Ibid., p. 897. The man, endowed with a divine mission, may be called, in Iqbal's terminology, the vicegerent of God.
 2. Ibid., pp. 897-98.
 3. Ibid., p. 901.

a next evolutionary step of Nature. The superman would regard himself as a universal being and all other beings as essentially divine, he would feel oneness and sympathy with them. He would have power no doubt, but he would be first "self-ruler" and then only "world-ruler." He would try to know the laws of the being of others and would help them develop their inherent potentialities to the best of their ability. He would lead his fellow-beings to light, joy and power. Thus the divinity would come to dwell in our earthly existence. It is the belief of Sri Aurobindo that this great fruition would be the result of the Grace of God¹ as well as of the conscious effort on the part of man.

So far the concept of Superman is concerned, Sri Aurobindo strongly differs from Nietzsche. A ruthless, egoistic and world-dominating personality is no better than a Titan for Sri Aurobindo. Criticising Nietzsche's Superman, he says, "Nietzsche hymned the Olympian but presented him with the aspect of the Asura"² (i.e. Titan). According to Sri Aurobindo, the Superman is made in God's image. However, he also points out the difference between God and him. Elucidating the point, he says, "there is this difference between the divine Reality and its human representative that

1. Arya, No. 9 (Pondicherry), Sri Aurobindo : 'Superman', p. 573.

2. Ibid., p. 571.

everything which in the One is unlimited, spontaneous, absolute, harmonious, self-posessed, becomes in the other limited, relative laboured, discordant, deformed, possessed by struggle, kept by subservience to one's possession, lost by the transience and insecurity which come from wrong holding. But in this constant imperfection, there is always a craving and an aspiration towards perfection.¹

Further, Sri Aurobindo holds that the superman is neither egoistic and ruthless ruler, nor a weak and impotent one. His Superman is a fine synthesis of both the Love and Power. For, he believes that Delight, Power, Unity, knowledge and Love are some of the names of God. If we follow any one of these exclusively, we limit God. We have been left where we were because while we have adored one quality, we have left others neglected. True life is a harmony of all these qualities; none can be neglected. Hence Sri Aurobindo says, "Love must call Power and knowledge into the temple and seat them beside her in a unified euqlity; Power must bow its neck to the yoke of Light and Love before it can do any real good to the race."² The realisation of the stage of Supermanhood, according to Sri Aurobindo, is possible through Yoga which means a concentrated effort at increasing the consciousness. Yoga accelerates the evolutionary process. It is "a concentration of centuries of slow evolution into a few years of

1. Ibid., p. 573.

2. Ibid., p. 576.

revolutionary march to capture the 'kingdom of Heaven'¹
 Sri Aurobindo terms his concept of Yoga as 'Integral Yoga' on the following accounts. First, the three Yogas — The Yoga of actions (कर्म-योग), the Yoga of love or devotion (भक्ति-योग) and the Yoga of knowledge (ज्ञान-योग) — which have generally been practised in isolation from one another, are synthesised in his system of Yoga. Secondly, what his Yoga seeks to fulfill is the integral development of man; there should be an all-directional development of all the three, Body, Mind and Soul. No one of these is to be developed to the exclusion of the other. Moreover, the individual has not to be content with his own development alone. He has to take all the humanity with him on the path of Yoga.

Evidently, Sri Aurobindo has realised fully the need of a corporate life in a society as an essential condition for the realisation of his ideal. As we learn from his writings, ever since 1910, he was thinking in terms of establishing a spiritual commune in one form or other.² The Ashram at Pondicherry which Sri Aurobindo had founded was intended to serve this purpose. This Ashram is striving towards the

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1. Haridas Chaudhury : Sri Aurobindo, the Prophet of the Life Divine.
 2. Sri Aurobindo Circle No. 8 (Bombay), A.B. Purani, "Sri Aurobindo and His Yoga", p. 151.

realisation of the divine life. Together with the spiritual Sādhana, the proper development and education of physical body and mind forms the very important part of the Ashram-life. Besides, the inmates of the Ashram are carrying on all the activities of a modern industrial world. Explaining the life in his Ashram, Sri Aurobindo remarks, "A total perfection is the ultimate aim which we set before us for our ideal is the divine Life which we wish to create here, the life of the Spirit fulfilled on earth, life accomplishing its own spiritual transformation even here on earth in the conditions of the material universe. That cannot be unless the body too undergoes a transformation....."¹

The aspiration, self-surrender and the Divine Grace, are, in short, the soul of Sri Aurobindo's Yoga. However hard one tries to bring down the higher powers of consciousness into lower recesses of the Body, Mind and Soul, they will not flood the lower being, till the Divine Grace is also ready to descend into the lower levels to transform them. Summarising the spirit of his Yoga, he says, "There are two powers that alone can effect in their conjunction the great and difficult thing which is the aim of our endeavour, a fixed and unflinching aspiration that calls from below and a supreme Grace from above that answers."²

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1. Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education (Pondicherry), 1960) p.43.
 2. Sri Aurobindo : The Mother, p. 1.

The above is the Ideal of human life as envisaged by Sri Aurobindo. We have seen that he stands for the doctrine of self-fulfilment as against self-annihilation. He lays stress on an active and vigorous life; asceticism does not represent the true character of Indian culture, according to him.

Let us now see, what is Iqbal's concept of perfect man and in what way the development takes place in the individual for the realisation of the stage of perfect man. According to Iqbal, there are three stages in the spiritual evolution of man. The first stage is the stage of obedience. In this stage, the individual has to obey all the injunctions of Islam and perform his duties which are prescribed by the divine law. The second stage is that of self-control. One has to govern himself by himself, the nobler part of nature. He that does not command himself becomes a receiver of commands from others.¹ The individual should fear no one but God. He should also not have attachment with worldly things. When he has succeeded in doing the above, he becomes able to control the wild impulses of his body.

Divine Vicegerency is the third stage in the development of the individual. Iqbal believes that one who can rule his body, can also rule the whole world. This is the highest

1. The Secrets of the Self, p. 75.

stage of development. According to him, the purpose of God in creating man was to place His own vicegerent or representative upon earth. Every man is potentially the vicegerent of God. But he has to realise this status manifestly. The vicegerent is the conquerer and ruler of the universe. He knows every secret of the world. This concept of vicegerent is, in fact, Iqbal's concept of perfect man. He thinks that the perfect man will be the highest product of evolution. In his "Asrar-e-Khudi", he describes him in the following way:

"Nature travails in blood for generations
To compose the harmony of his personality.
Our handful of earth has reached the Zenith,
For that champion will come forth from this dust
There sleeps amidst the ashes of our Today
The flame of a world-consuming morrow."

Further, Iqbal invokes the perfect man to be born and to do God's works on earth:

"Appear, O rider of Destiny;
Appear, O Light of the dark realm of Change;
Illumine the scene of existence;
Dwell in the blackness of our eyes;

1. Ibid., p. 78.

Silence the noise of the nations;
 Imparadise our ears with thy music;
 Arise and tune the harp of brotherhood;
 Give us back the cup of the wine of love;
 Bring once more days of peace to the world;
 Give a message of peace to them that seek
 battle;
 Mankind are the cornfield and thou
 the harvest.

Thou art the goal of Life's caravan.

.....

It is to thee that we owe our dignity
 And silently undergo the pains of life.¹

Thus we see that Iqbal's concept of vicegerent of God or superman is in tune with the logic of evolution. According to him, he is the last stage of human development on earth. "He is the completest Ego, the goal of humanity, the acme of life both in mind and body,"² Iqbal further tells us that this superman will be the synthesis of power and knowledge, thought and action, intuition and reason, "He is the last fruit of the tree of humanity, and all the trials of a painful

1. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

2. Ibid., (Intro.) p. xxvii.

evolution are justified because he is to come at the end.¹ His kingdom will be the kingdom of God on earth. "The more we advance in evolution", says Iqbal, "the nearer we get to him. In approaching him we are rising ourselves in the scale of life. The development of humanity both in mind and body is a condition precedent to his birth. For the present he is a mere idea; but the evolution of humanity is tending towards the production of an ideal race of more or less unique individuals who will become his fitting parents."² According to Iqbal, the kingdom of heaven upon earth will mean the democracy of such supermen presided over by the most perfect superman out of them. Nietzsche also had a glimpse of such an ideal race. Some people wrongly think that Iqbal's concept of superman is exactly similar to that of Nietzsche. But Iqbal himself points out the difference between his concept and that of Nietzsche saying that Nietzsche's "atheism and aristocratic prejudices married his whole conception."³

Again, it is also important to mention here that Nietzsche hates democracy as the 'rule of the herd' and stands for the aristocracy of superman. He has no faith in the common men. Criticising his stand, Iqbal says that the plebeian is not absolutely hopeless. In Islam, every

1. Ibid., p. xxiii. In his "Bal-e-Jibril", he describes this truth in the following way:

آیه کائنات کا معنی دیرباب تو * نکلے تری تلاش میں قافلہ ہائے رنگ و بو
(You are the late-arrived meaning of the mystery of the world. In fact, the caravans of smell and hue are out in search after you.)

2. Ibid., p. xxiii.

3. Ibid., p. xxix.

individual is regarded as the centre of the latent power, "the possibilities of which can be developed by cultivating a certain type of character. Out of the plebeian material Islam has formed men of the noblest type of life and power."¹ Hence he asks, "Is not, then, the democracy of early ~~the~~² Islam an experimental refutation of the ideas of Nietzsche?"

This, in short, is the concept of Iqbal's perfect man to whom he often refers in his poetry by various names, such as, 'Mard-e-Momin', 'Mard-e-Kamil', 'Mard-e-Hur' (the freeman), 'Darwesh-e-Khuda Mast' (God-intoxicated man), etc. There are many verses of Iqbal which describe the attributes and characteristics of such a man. He regards him as the co-worker with God. His perfect man also conquers and moulds the universe according to his own ideals. In his support, Iqbal quotes a verse from the Quran also which recognises the existence of creators other than God.³ In his 'Bal-e-Jibril', Iqbal describes the characteristics of 'Mard-e-Momin' in the following way : The hand of 'Mard-e-Momin is the hand of God. His hand is dominant, creator and solver of the problems and the doer of works. Although he is made of dust, his foundation is of light; he is God's servant but he possesses the ~~attributes~~

1. The New Era, 1916, Dr. Iqbal : Muslim Democracy, p.251.

2. Ibid., p. 251.

3. The secrets of the self, p. xiii (Introduction) :
 "Blessed is God, the best of those who create."
 ——— The Quran, 23 : 14.

attributes of God. His selfless heart is indifferent to the two worlds (i.e. the world and the hereafter). His hopes are few, his ideals high. His poise is charming and his eyes beneficent to the hearts. In talks, he is self-hearted; in pursuits, he is hot-spirited. Whether in battle or in assembly, he is pious-hearted.¹

In another Urdu verse, Iqbal tells us that the Mard-e-Momin is as soft as silk in the assembly of his friends. But if he be in the battle of truth and falsehood, he becomes steel.² At another place, he says that there is every moment a new poise and a new glory of the Momin. His talks and his actions reveal God's reasoning. A Momin is made after the combination of our divine attributes, viz., Wrath (Qahhar),

1. ہاتھ ہے اللہ کا بندہ مومن کا ہاتھ
غالب و کار آفرین کار کشا کار ساز
خاکی و نوری نہاد بندہ مولا صفات
ہر دو جہان سے غنی اسکا دل بے نیاز
اس کی امیدیں قلیل اس کے مقاصد جلیل
اس کی ادا دلفریب اس کی نگہ دل نواز
نرم دم گفتگو گوم دم جستجو
رزم ہو یا بزم ہو پاک دل و پاکباز
— Bal-e-Jibril, p. 132.

2. ہو حلقہ یاران تو برشم کی طرح نرم
رزم حق و باطل ہو تو فولاد ہے مومن
— Zarb-e-Kalim, p. 31.

forgiveness (Ghaffari), purity (Quddusi) and Omnipotence (Jabrut).¹ Iqbal also remarks that he is that dew which cools the heart of the Tulip whereas he is also that storm which tears the hearts of the rivers.²

In this way, we see that Iqbal's perfect man is a unique mixture of Love and Power. He is not a ruthless ruler of mankind. He possesses the qualities of kindness, forgiveness and tenderness. But there is Power also in him to curb down the evil forces. Herein finds Iqbal the justification for war to crush the evil forces in the love of God. He warns that if the war is inspired by the greed and ambition to achieve dominion over nations, it is condemnable; such war brings dishonour to the people.³ Man should inculcate in him an attitude of independence towards material goods and

1. ہر لحظہ ہے مومن کی نئی شان نئی آن
گفتار میں کردار میں اللہ کی برہان
قہاری و غفاری و قدوسی و جہروت
یہ چار عناصر ہوں تو بنتا ہے مسلمان
— Ibid., p. 42.

2. جس سے جگولالہ میں ٹھنڈک ہو وہ شبنم
دریاؤں کے دل جس سے دھل جائیں وہ طوفان
— Ibid., p. 43.

3. The secret of the self, p. 118.

wordly pleasures — an attitude which is summed up by Iqbal's term 'Faqr'. His 'Faqr' is not nakedness, fasting or asceticism but active participation in the world but without being enslaved by it. Iqbal's explanation of the basic formula of Islam, لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ (There is no god except One God), is in harmony with this theme. In the first part of the formula (لَا إِلَهَ), allegiance to all things other than God is denied. In the second part (إِلَّا اللَّهُ), loyalty and obedience to One God is affirmed. Both, according to him, are the implications of the Love of God. The first part gives the perfect man an urge to fight against injustices and oppressions and everything that debases humanity. The second part provides him with an ideal in the light of which a better and healthy order of society is to be created. Thus 'Faqr' and war, according to Iqbal, are nothing but the necessary implications of his ideal of 'Love' which inspires the perfect man.

6. THE PLACE OF SUFFERING AND EVIL IN LIFE

Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal consider the role of suffering and evil in life as very significant. Both of them believe that our life can be strong and fortified through coming into conflict with obstacles and difficulties which oppose and negate life.

but in reality stimulate the life-activities. These opposing forces of life, e.g., sufferings, dangers and difficulties, are the necessary conditions of an active and vigorous life. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal even go to the extent of regarding the satanic forces as the very manifestation of God Himself or His deliberate creation. This truth is very well brought out in the following poem by Sri Aurobindo:

"The God of Wrath, the God of Love are one
 Nor least He loves when most He smites, Alone
 Who rises above fear and plays with grief,
 Defeat and death, inherits full relief
 From blindness and beholds the single Form
 Love masking Terror, Peace supporting storm."¹

There is yet another poem of Sri Aurobindo which shows that the life of sorrows and difficulties on earth is better than paradise, for, here are the possibilities to fulfil the self.² Thus to Sri Aurobindo, the earth is not a damned place or a despicable mess from which man should escape as soon as possible. On the contrary, it is a stage for us to act and to make it a fit place for living by unfolding the involved potentialities of Brahman in us and in the earth. That is why,

1. Sri Aurobindo : Collected Poems and Plays, Vol.II, p. 129.

2. Ibid., p. 284.

Sri Aurobindo invokes the Love-aspect of the Divine to
 "Arise from the heart of the yearning that sobs in Nature's
 abyss," and to make "earth the home of the Wonderful and life
 Beautitude's kiss."¹

The following poem from Sri Aurobindo throws light on
 the fact as to how the evil and satanic forces help amplify
 our life on earth. The title of the poem is "The Rakshasas":—
 :—

2

"So prayed the Lord of Lanka, and in heaven
 Sri Krishna smiled, the Friend of all mankind,
 And asked, 'O' masters of the knowledge, Seers,
 Who help me by your thoughts to help mankind,
 Harken what Ravan cries against the stars,
 Demanding earth for heritage. Advise,
 Shall he then have it?' and a cry arose,
 'He would root out the Brahmains from the earth,
 Impose his dreadful Yoga on mankind
 And make the violent heart, the iron hand

-
1. Ibid., p. 302. Similar views are expressed by Iqbal in his poem "Ruh-e-Arzi Adam Ka Istaqbal karti Hai" (The Spirit of Earth Welcome Adam) in his 'Bal-e-Jibril'. pp. 178-79.
 2. i.e., Ravana. He is depicted here as symbolising evil forces.

Sovereign of all'. Sri Krishna made reply,

'From out Myself he went to do my will

He has not lied, he has the knowledge. He

And I are one.¹ How then shall I refuse?

.....

He puts the Vanara out of the world,

Accustoming to grandeur all mankind:

.....Were he denied

His period, man could not progress. But since

He sees himself as Me, not Me in him,

And takes the life and body for the whole,

He cannot last²

Thus we see that according to Sri Aurobindo, the evil forces are also the manifestation of God Himself and that the purpose of these forces, evils, pains and suffering is to make us strong through struggling with them.

1. Iqbal expresses the same truth a bit differently:

اسے صبح ازل انکار کی جرات ہوئی کیونکر * مجھے معلوم کیا وہ راز دان تیرا ہے یا میرا

(Why did he (Stan) dare disobey Thee on the morn of creation? How can I know it? Is he Thy secret-knower or mine?) Bal-e-Jibril, p.7. Iqbal refers here to the episode of Satan's refusal to bow to Adam and the consequent wrath of God on Satan and the enmity of Satan and Adam which ultimately resulted in the expulsion of both from the paradise. This marks the morn of creation. Iqbal believes that this all episode was a willed action of God as the preface to this creation. Satan and Adam are not responsible for it.

2. Ibid., pp. 133-34.

Just like Sri Aurobindo, Iqbal also stands for active and vigorous life. And since the realisation of the goal brings all the activities of life at a stand still, Iqbal would forego the goal rather than stop at the destination, for, the stopping is equivalent to death. For this reason alone, Iqbal greatly values dangers, difficulties, pains and sufferings as these keep life going by stirring resistance.¹ The physical world is for the benefit and use of man. He has to conquer it and master it so as to be suitable to his desires.

Iqbal believes that the evil and satanic forces are for the amplification of life. They provide man with the opportunity to fortify his life against those forces which threaten its existence. Referring to the Quranic episode of Satan's disobedience of God and his consequent expulsion from heaven and the beginning of the enmity between Man and Satan, Iqbal maintains that the beginning of this world of sufferings and sorrows is not due to the disobedience of Satan but that it was the intention of God Himself to create a world and as a necessary condition to active and vigorous life, He planted

1. Thus in his "Payam-e-Mashriq", Iqbal says:

تو نہ شناسی هنوز شوق بمیرد ز وصل
چہیست حیات دوام سوختن نا تمام

in it the satanic forces also.¹ Hence in his poetry, Iqbal has not condemned Satan for the evils and sufferings, which he brings in the universe. For, in his absence, there would have been no opposing forces which put obstacles to life. Hence Iqbal welcomes all the difficulties, dangers, sufferings and grief. In his poem "Taskheer-e-Fitrat", the Satan advises Adam to cheerfully embrace the earthly life full of opposing forces and to conquer them and utilise them for his welfare.² Iqbal clearly tells us in his Payam-e-Mashriq, "If you want to live, then live in dangers."³

Iqbal thinks that as there was no work to do in the heavens, the life of Adam was very monotonous, Satan, the symbol of active life, brought him down on the earth full of pain and suffering. Once having come in this unfavourable environment, man has got the mission of conquering the evil forces and mastering the Nature to remould it nearer to his heart's desires. However, Iqbal's Satan finds that the man is very weak and frail and does too readily surrender himself

1. The Reconstruction, p. 88.

2. Payam-e-Mashriq, pp. 97-99.

3. Ibid., p. 143:

اگر خواهی حیات اندر خطری

before his crafts. Hence in "Jawed Namah", he complains to God that he is spoiled due to this weak - spirited man. He says to God:

"O 'God! give me a strong worshiper of the Truth
(i.e. God). So that I may enjoy the pleasure of defeat."¹

Iqbal believes that the evolution of life cannot be complete without its struggle with the forces which negate and oppose it. Hence these forces are necessary and vital. They are to be conquered and mastered. This struggle with the evil forces will make the self strong and fortified and thus save us from its dissolution at the time of death. Iqbal glorifies man because even after being put in an environment full of difficulties and sufferings, man has succeeded in creating a better world for himself. Iqbal puts these ideas in the mouth of man who says to God, "Thou created darkness; I created lamp. Thou created earth, I created goblet. Thou created wilderness, mountains and forests; I created gardens, parks and greeneries. I am one who makes mirror out of stone.

1. Jawed Namah, pp. 160-61:

ای خدا یک زنده مرد حق پرست
لذت شاید که یابم در شکست

I am one who draws honey out of poison.¹

We are thus in a position to conclude that unless we adopt the above discussed melioristic or pragmatic attitude towards this problem of suffering, we cannot adjust ourselves to the scientific spirit of modern age which always soars higher and higher to conquer the forces which threaten man's life and to control the forces of Nature for the welfare of humanity.

In this way, we see a great message of vigorous and active life in Iqbal's writings which has often been misunderstood to mean a ruthless egoism. Iqbal's critics quote his following Urdu verse in particular as a proof of his egoism:

"Enraise thy 'self' so high that before ordaining
thy destiny, God Himself may ask thee, "What is
thy wish?"²

1. Iqbal : Payam-e-Mashriq, p. 132:

تو شب آفریدی چراغ آفریدم
سفال آفریدی ایام آفریدم
بیابان و کھسار و راغ آفریدی
خیابان و گلزار و باغ آفریدم

من آنم که از سنگ آئینه سازم

من آنم که از زهرنوشینه سازم

2. Bal-e-Jibril, p. 13.

But as a matter of fact, it is not egoism but a message of action to those who have abandoned action due to the belief in absolute fatalism. According to Iqbal, there is no fixed order of events determined by supernatural destiny, but that by enriching his 'self', a man can himself shape his own destiny. In view of the prevailing passivity and inaction born of the doctrines of fatalism and self-negation, such a vigorous and stirring egoism was necessary. As a matter of fact, Iqbal himself was aware of and hence afraid of his over-emphasis on the preservation of selfhood. In his "Bāl-e-Jibrīl", he says:-

"The Love has made me a boundless stream. (I am afraid) May not my self-guarding become my bank.
(i.e. Limitation)."

All the writings of Iqbal including his poems are attempt at the teaching of the philosophy of self-preservation and active life in face of the philosophy of self-negation and the resultant passivity of life. This is, in short, the sole motive-force behind all his writings. But some persons have been lured to misinterpret his teaching of self-preservation as ruthless and cruel animal type of egoism. But in all sincerity, Iqbal never means it. The type of manhood which he wants to create is a wonderful mixture of both power and love, of head and heart. He lays more emphasis on heart, the

soft and kindred human feelings than on power.¹

So we see that Iqbal never emphasised absolute and ruthless egoism. Moreover, the charge of absolute egoism could have been established had Iqbal not gone farther than what he said else where and in "Asrār-e-Khudī" in particular. But we would see, he actually does go farther than that. Having shown the necessity of the preservation of the individual's self, he goes on to write another philosophical poem, "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī" in which he describes the necessity and fruits of mingling the individual self in the main stream of society. Because society is also a necessity for the survival of man. Erst - while, he was preaching the preservation of the self; now in this poem, he preaches us to lose our 'self' in the not-self (Bekhudī i.e. society). We have to preserve our self at all cost but we are not to confine ourselves to that alone. Otherwise, the possibilities of our self - development will be limited. The breadth of outlook generated by the spiritual vision asks us to expand our 'self' beyond

1.

یا بزور دلبری انداختند

یا بزور قاهری انداختند

زانکه حق درد دلبری پیدا ترست

دلبری از قاهری اولی ترست

— Jāwēd Nāmāh, p. 153.

us. Thus the first necessity is to affirm our 'self'; the second necessity is to mingle our 'self' in the vast ocean of the society. Because we, being social animals, cannot survive without society. It was this realisation that led Iqbal to compose his "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī" after his "Asrār-e-Khudī". It is this poem which absolve Iqbal from the charge of absolute egoism. Professor A.J.Arberry has thus rightly remarked : "It is obvious that the Iqbalian conception of selfhood, if developed in isolation from society, ends in unmitigated egoism and anarchy. But he was not interested merely in the individual and his self-realization,; he was equally concerned with the evolution of an ideal society or community as he preferred to call it it is only as an association of self-affirming individuals that the community can come into being and perfect itself. Iqbal thus escapes from libertarianism by limiting the individual's freedom, making him a member of a homogeneous community and from totalitarianism by limiting the community's authority, making it a challenge and not an insurmountable obstacle to the individual's self-realization.¹"

1. A.J.Arberry : The Mysteries of Selflessness (Trans. of 'Ramuz-e-Bekhudī' London, 1953) p. xi (Preface).

7. THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SOCIETY

This brings us to the discussion of the relationship of the individual and/society as conceived by Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Until now we have been discussing the development in which the individual is the centre. The above-mentioned Ideal is only a part of the whole concept of their Ideal of human life. The individual has, no doubt, to find and fulfil his own self. But this is not all. For, this aspect of the Ideal if pursued in isolation will fail to assign proper place to society which is necessary for the survival of man who is a social animal and whose even vital needs cannot be fulfilled without society. Hence the other part of Sri Aurobindo's and Iqbal's Ideal of human life comprises of the individual's development in relation to the society. So we are giving below the views of the two philosophers regarding the relationship of the individual and the society.

(1) Views of Sri Aurobindo:

Sri Aurobindo gives us a justification for the existence of the society. According to him, the urge towards immortality is almost universal in the world. But the struggle for survival stoops before the unyielding principle of death. Hence the individual cherishes this wish for immortality

through reproducing his species in collaboration with his mate. And this urge in the individual lays the foundation of the society.¹ The need for mutual co-operation and living in the society for the preservation of the species by the individual is governed by the principle of love.

Sri Aurobindo emphasises that though the individuality is the necessary unit for further evolution, its fusion with the other members of the group is also an unavoidable need. And this establishes the importance of both the individual and the society. He further says that when the Nature starts on her errand of creation out of Infinite Brahman (the Absolute) her first mission is to create separatist finite forms with the view to distinguish the created from the Sachchidananda Himself. For, otherwise, there will be no real creation. When the Nature has attained this goal, she reverses her process. Now the group profits and progresses forward by the dissolution of the individualities of the members constituting it. Evidently, this process also cannot last for ever. For, the dissolution will go on diminishing the creation. Hence the Nature adopts a process by which the individual while developing his individuality, merges it in the society.

-
1. Iqbal also thinks that the urge of self-reproduction is the expression of the individual's longing for immortality.

Now Sri Aurobindo tries to explain that such a harmony of individualistic and aggregational tendencies of the individual is possible only on the conscious level, i.e. Man. Because man possesses the faculty of memory. A mental being can form an integral view of his past, present and future by virtue of imagination. On vital level, there is no possibility of such an integral view.

The harmonious living is possible only through the principle of love. Sri Aurobindo remarks that it can also be said that love is tendered through self-giving and fusion with other 'self'. However, at the same time, the individuality should also be fully preserved. For, otherwise, there will be no one to give or receive Love. On mental level, the aggressive type of struggle for existence at the expense of other lives is transformed into survival through "mutual help and a self-perfectioning by mutual adaptation, interchange and fusion."¹ Therefore, Sri Aurobindo defines 'Love' as "the desire to give oneself to others and to receive others in exchange; it is a commerce between being and being."²

Sri Aurobindo further tells us that in the early stages, Love is also dominated, just like on vital level, by

1. The Life Divine, Vol. I, p. 311.

2. Ibid., p. 312.

the will to receive. It is only in its higher stages that the Love is compelled to surrender itself to the desired object. Otherwise it cannot survive. However, according to Sri Aurobindo, the true nature of Love is to be manifested in an equal give-and-take relationship. This is achieved in an utter unity between its own self and the other self which was regarded previously as a self other than its own self. In unity, both the selves become one and the same self.

He further maintains that on the physical level, the tendency to possess itself marks the individuality. On the vital level, we find a struggle to possess and a tendency to master his own self as well as the selves of others. In the mental being, there is a harmony between these two tendencies — the tendency to possess and the tendency to be possessed. Here the not-self (i.e. other self) is dearer and greater than the individual's own self. Thus we can say that the working of Love necessitate the plurality of individualities, i.e., society.

There is yet another view - point from which Sri Aurobindo justifies the need of the society. During the course of evolution, according to him, as there come into existence different individualised beings, so also there are also born "Collective powers of consciousness which are large

subjective formations of cosmic Nature.¹ He further remarks that for this collective or mass consciousness, there is no organised body but the group of the individuals; there is no one mind for it but a group-mind. The development of this collective being and the individual is very closely related with each other. The more conscious the individual is, the more conscious is the collective being. The growth of the individual, according to Sri Aurobindo, is very essential for the inner growth of the society. It is through the individual that the "collective spirit organises its collective units and makes them self-expressive and progressive."² By itself the mass consciousness or the consciousness of the collectivity is almost Inconscient; its movements are subconscious, obscure and mute. Hence the collectivity stands in need of the individual for its organisation and effective expression.³ Sri Aurobindo here

1. Ibid., p. 606.

2. Ibid., p. 607.

3. Ibid., p. 607. Similarly Iqbal says:

افراد کے ہاتھوں میں ہے اقوام کی تقدیر
ہر فرد ہے ملت کے مقدر کا ستارا

(The destiny of the nations lies in the hands of the individuals. Every individual is the star of the community's destiny) -----

----- Armughān-e-Hijaz, p. 232.

hints also towards a possible danger. He says that the mass consciousness is "prone to a blind or half - seeing unanimity."¹ And hence it is possible that the individual is suppressed in the common movement of the collective consciousness. However, this kind of suppression gives strength and practical efficiency to a nation or community.²

In this way, we can describe the relationship between the individual and the society in Sri Aurobindo's own words. He says: "The collectivity is a mass, a field of formation; the individual is the diviner of truth, the form-maker, the creator."³ Hence inspite of mixing with the society, the man has to maintain his individuality separately just as his body is "unique and recognisable in the physicality."⁴ For this purpose, he has, even, in the end, to retire into himself in order to find himself.⁵ Here Sri Aurobindo further tells us that if the man has not got a sufficiently fortified individuality, he cannot attain to the oneness with all without losing the fulfilment of his own mind and soul.

1. Ibid., p. 607.

2. Ibid., p. 608.

3. Ibid., pp. 608-9.

4. Ibid., p. 609.

5. Ibid., p. 609.

Thus we see that the development of both the individual and the society is very essential. But the problem before us is: What should be the ideal relationship between the individual and the society? For, often the claims of the individual and the claims of the society are mutually conflicting. Sri Aurobindo mentions three possible solutions: (1) Free and complete development of the each individual; (2) Full development of the society; (3) Right and balanced relationship between the individual and society.¹ It is clear that the first two views are professed by the extremists. They emphasise exclusive dominance of one over the other. Sri Aurobindo says that according to the first view, the society is meant for the individual. The interests of the society should be sacrificed for the good of the individual. The society should respect the freedom of each of its members and maintain itself not by dictatorship but by democracy.² The true object of our existence is the free development of our own individual personality on the road of self-realisation. The function of the society is to provide the suitable environment for the individual's perfection.

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960) p. 1244.

2. Sri Aurobindo : Synthesis of Yoga, p. 223.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the second view which is just the opposite of the first, places society as exclusively important. In the interest of the society, the individual should merge and lose completely his own individuality. The individual must live not for himself but for the tribe, clan, commune or nation of which he is a member. There is no other purpose or use, no other goal of individual's life other than sacrificing himself for the sake of the society. The individual should have no choice of his own but cast himself in the moulds of the aims, ideals, aspirations and the culture of the society, he is only an instrument for the maintenance and efficiency of the society.¹

The third solution which is a sort of via media between the above discussed two views, is professed by Sri Aurobindo himself. According to this view, the individual has to maintain good ethical and social relations with other men. As man is a social being, he has to live in the society and be of utility to it. On the other hand, the society is also supposed to be for the service of all. It is the duty of the society to give each individual his right place, education, training, equal economic opportunities and a right frame of life in the world.² In this connection, Sri Aurobindo

1. The Life Divine (Pondicherry, 1960) p. 1244.

2. Ibid., p. 1244.

appreciates ancient organisation of the society. The life of an individual in that society, as we have already seen, was divided into four Ashramas, viz; Brahmacharya, Gārhasthya Vānprastha, and Sanyāsa. In this scheme of life, proper place was given to the community and to the sound adjustment of the individual with the society. But in this scheme of organisation, there was also an idea of the perfection of the individual through self-realisation. Sri Aurobindo says that in ancient India, it was the idea of the spiritual individual that was dominant, but the society was also of extreme importance. For, it was in the society and under its moulding influence that the individual had to pass first ¹ through the social status of physical, vital, mental being with his satisfaction of interest, desires, pursuit of knowledge and right living before he could reach fitness for a truer self-realisation and a free spiritual existence.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the above-mentioned is the ideal form of relationship of the individual and the society. But he says that in recent times, the hold and domination of the society is increasing and the existence of the individual is being subordinated to it.² The principle of self and its

1. Ibid., pp. 1244-45.

2. Ibid., p. 1245.

interests are being opposed by the principle of altruism. He says that the "State erects its godhead and demands his obedience, submission, subordination self-immolation."¹ Obviously, thinks Sri Aurobindo, such an autocratic and totalitarian state is unsuitable for the free spiritual development of the individual. Hence the individual has to affirm against this exorbitant claim, the rights of his ideals, his ideas, his personality, his conscience.²

Sri Aurobindo realises also the need of a leader for the community. This leader must need be a perfect individual. He thinks that an individual or a group of individuals can very effectively embody, express, lead and organise the mass consciousness.³ The efficiency and the power of the collectivity is greatly enhanced when the individual subordinates his own consciousness with that of the society. For the unity and strength of the society, common culture and common ideal has been regarded by Sri Aurobindo as an indispensable factor. The secret of all powerful nations lies in this factor.⁴

1. Ibid., p. 1246.

2. Ibid., p. 1246.

3. The Life Divine, Vol.II Pt. II, pp. 607-8.

4. Ibid., p. 608.

Thus we may conclude that according to Sri Aurobindo, the ideal of human life is the preservation of the individuality or self of man and its fulfilment and the realisation of its spiritual possibilities living here in this world and taking active part in the affairs of the society. The achievement of this two-fold Ideal of man will make possible the establishment of the divine life.

However, Sri Aurobindo thinks that the main hinderance in the realisations of the divine life is that our human nature is still tempted towards its indulgence in physical grossness and inertia; it does not readily correspond to the tense demand of the spiritual effort. Moreover, it is too much sceptic about humanity's spiritual progress. The spirit's call is responded only by few individuals here and there. The lasting transformation of our whole nature is possible if we all, as a race, march towards the goal of spiritual realisation. It may not be possible, says Sri Aurobindo, for the whole human race to realise spirit all at once; but our endeavour must be in that direction. Otherwise the humanity may fall back into the pit of disappointment which is very fatal to its survival.¹

1. Ibid., p. 654.

In this way, we have seen that according to Sri Aurobindo, the individuality of man is not completely dissolved on attaining to the highest spiritual realisation of God. Moreover, he also holds that the society is also a necessity. Hence every individual has to mix himself in the society and to be useful to the society to the extent his own individual spiritual aspiration is not hindered. It is clear that there is no place for asceticism or renunciation of the world in the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo.

(ii) Views of Iqbal:

Now we proceed on to discuss the views of Iqbal regarding the relation of the individual and the society as set forth in his Persian Masnavi "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī".

In the very beginning of his Masnavi, Iqbal throws light on the mutual relationship between the individual and the society. He says that the link which binds the individual to the society is a kind of divine mercy. Individual's real 'self' finds its realisation only in the community or society. To support his thesis that the individual should mingle himself with the society, he quotes a saying of the Prophet of Islam which asserts that the Satan keeps away from where the men are assembled. The individual is like a jewel which is threaded on the cord of the society. He is like

a star which shines in the constellation of the society. Through mingling himself with the society, the individual gets respect and in this way the society is also organised. Iqbal expresses the foregoing truth by a simile. It is just like a drop which wants to expand itself and becomes¹ an ocean.

Iqbal further tells us that the society is a link between the past and future and that it is as infinite as the Eternity itself.² What more, the individual owes his body and soul to the society. Individual when he is a child, is brought up by the society and is made a concrete individual in the collectivity. His individuality remains distinct in the society. But his existence gives a cementing force to the unity of the society. Iqbal further tells us that the education of the individual is also due to the society alone. Instinctively, the behaviour and actions of the individual are wild and uncontrolled. It is society alone which disciplines and channelises them and thus makes him cultured. Here also he gives us a simile that the deer yields his musk only in the captivity.³ So also only when

1. A.J.Arberry : The Mysteries of Selflessness (English translation of Iqbal's "Ramuz-e-Bekhudi"). p.5.

2. Ibid., p. 5.

3. Ibid., p. 6.

the individual is bound in the laws of the society, he becomes the creator of noble deeds and high ideals.

Again, Iqbal says that the nature of our 'self' is such that it is both free and bound. Though it is a part, it has got a potentiality to seize the whole.¹ When the self comes out of its solitude and mingles itself in the collectivity, its ego-sense, i.e., 'I-am-ness' is dissolved. The compulsion of the laws of the society cuts the freedom of its choice. However, this makes the self rich in love. Unless the pride of ego-sense is ~~removed~~ removed from the self, humility cannot come to it. As we have already seen, certain mystics taught the philosophy of self-negation. In contrast, Iqbal preached the doctrine of self-preservation and self-fulfilment in his 'Asrār-e-Khudī', Here in his 'Ramūz-e-Khudī', he tells us that now the self profits by dissolving itself in the community. It is just like a petal which negates itself as petal and turns into a rosary by mingling itself with the collectivity of the petals.²

1. Ibid., p. 7.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

After the individual has fortified his 'self', the next step for him is to mix up with the society.¹ For, without it, even his security and preservation is not possible.² Let us see what Iqbal has to say else where regarding the relationship of the individual and the society. At one place he says that the individual is alive only due to its relationship with the community; alone, he is nothing. Here Iqbal explains it with a simile. The wave's existence is in the river; outside the river, it is nothing.³ In his 'Jāwed Nāmāh', he says that the life possesses two kinds of attributes: it is the decorator of the assembly and the preservator of its own self. From this, he deduces an ideal of life. He asks us that as we are in the caravan, we have to go with it but at the same time remain unattached from it.⁴ He also tells us

1. Thus Iqbal says in Jāwed Nāmāh, p. 54:

گرچه اندر خلوت و جلوت خداست * خلوت آغاز است و جلوت انتہاست

(Although God is manifest both in solitude (i.e. self) and in society, the solitude is the beginning; society is the end).

2. Mysteries of selflessness, p. 8.

3. فرد قائم ربطِ ملت سے ہے تنہا کچھ نہیں
ہوچ ہے دریا میں اور بیرون دریا کچھ نہیں

4. زندگی انجمنِ آرا و نگہدارِ خود است
اے کہ در قافلہ بی ہمہ شویا ہمہ رو
— Jāwed Nāmāh, p. 230.

that it is good to go on the path of God together with the society, just like our soul which (though immaterial in essence) passes through physical world.¹ Further emphasising the importance of mingling of the individual with the society, Iqbal says through an Urdu verse that the destiny of the society lies in the hands of the individuals; every individual is the star of the destiny of the society. One who keeps himself aloof from the society is deprived of the advantages of being in the society.²

Just like Sri Aurobindo and social psychologists, Iqbal also believes that there is a soul or mind in the collectivity. But there is no one organised body for this soul. He says in his 'Jāwed Nāmāh' : "When the collectivity attains to unity, it acquires great power in its hands. The existence of the soul of the collectivity is due to the assembly. The soul of the collectivity does not stand in need of the body. As its existence is manifested due to the company, it dies when the company is shattered."³

1. راه حق با کاروان رفتن خوش است
 همچو جان اندر جهان رفتن خوش است
 — Jāwed Nāmāh, p. 54.

2. افراد کے ہاتھوں میں ہے اقوام کی تقدیر
 ہر فرد ہے ملت کے مقدر کا ستارا
 — Armughan-e-Hijaz, p. 232.

3. Jāwed Nāmāh, p. 227 :—

Iqbal considers the existence of a centre as assential for the working of the consciousness of the society. Thus in an Urdu verse he says that the separation from the centre is the death to the societies. If an individual is attached to a centre, its self becomes just like God.¹ For Muslim societies, he considers Kaba at Mecca as the centre.²

Iqbal's conception of the relationship of the individual and society is that of mutual interdependence. Individual cannot survive without society; society cannot survive without the individuals. Therefore, he is not ready to accept the absolute superiority and dominance of the society over the individual. He says, "In an over-organized society the individual is altogether crushed out of existence. He

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ملّے چون می شود توحید مست
قوت و جہروت می آید بدست

روح ملّت را وجود از انجمن * روح ملّت نیست محتاج بدن
تا وجودش را نمود از صحبت است * مرد چون شیرازہ محبت شکست
مرد؟ از یک نگاہی زندہ شو * بگر از بے مرکزی پایندہ شو

1. Zarb-e-Kalim, p. 122:

قوموں کے لئے موت ہے مرکز سے جدا
ہو صاحب مرکز تو خودی کیا ہے خدائی

2. The Mysteries of Selflessness, p. 19.

gains the whole wealth of social thought around him and loses his own soul.¹ He believes that an over-organised society cannot last long unless there are 'self-concentrated individual's to give a dynamic mould to the society freely.² Hence it can be said that the individual's free self-development should not be obstructed by the society. On the other hand, it has also been amply shown that Iqbal does not also stand for the absolute individualism. An individual without a society is just like a wave outside the river.

Now in his "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī", Iqbal comes to deal with what may be termed as the specific application of his Ideal of human life to the Muslim society. As we have seen in the first chapter, Iqbal believes that a humanitarian Ideal as expressed in philosophy and poetry is always universal. But if we are to apply that Ideal to practical ends, we are compelled to start with some specific and well-defined society. He is convinced that the Muslim community is capable of embodying the Ideal which he has set before us.

Further Iqbal deals with Islamic Society. He says that there are two pillars of Islam. First, the unity of God. Second, the apostleship. His conviction is that these are also the pillars for the unity and solidarity of Islamic

1. The Reconstruction of Religions Thought in Islam, p.151.

2. Ibid., p. 151.

society. The first pillar means that a man must believe only in One God. There is no duality or multiplicity in God according to Islam. There is no God but God. This creed is soul and body of Muslim community. This belief is the uniting factor. Muslim community is not bound by any country.¹ He also tells us that the belief in one God puts an end to despair, grief and fear which are the source of all the evils.²

The second pillar of Islam, according to Iqbal, is the apostleship. From Abraham to Mohammad (May peace be upon them) there has been a galaxy of Prophets who have been guiding mankind on the path of God. According to Islamic belief, the Prophet of Islam is the last prophet. Iqbal tells us that the purpose of his mission was to found freedom, equality and brotherhood among all mankind.³ Abu Jehal, the famous infidel of the Prophet's time, laments in the following way in Iqbal's 'Jāwed Nāmāh' complaining about the society which the Prophet has created. "His religion is the negator of country and race. Though he is from Quresh, he himself is the denier of the superiority of the Arabs. The high and low are one in his eyes; he sits to eat with his slave on the same table."⁴ This,

1. The Mysteries of selflessness, pp. 11-12.

2. Ibid., p. 14.

3. Ibid., pp. 21-23.

4. Jāwed Nāmāh, p. 59:

in short, gives a glimpse of an ideal society which was created by the efforts of the Prophet.

Iqbal in his poem 'Ramūz-e-Bekhudī', further tells us that as the Muslim community is based on the belief in One God and apostleship, it is not bounded by space. It is not founded after the concept of nationalism. In the next part of his poem, he tells us that a society can be organised only through the laws. For Muslim society, this law is furnished by the Quran. He also tells us that the society can be mature and strong only through following the divine Law and fashioning the conduct according to the manners of the Prophet.¹

Now Iqbal says that the secret of the continuance and activeness of our life lies in forming and following certain ideals and goals. He says : "The Goal is as a plectrum, that awakes the hidden music in the instrument of high ambition."² All our energies are directed towards this

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مذهب او قاطع ملک و نسب

از قریش و منکر از فضل عرب

در نگاه او یک بالا و پست

با غلام خویش بر یک خوان نشست

1. Mysteries of Selflessness, pp. 29-43.

2. Ibid., p. 53.

end. Likewise, there should be a common objective before the society also. For Muslim Society this goal consists in preserving and propagating the principle of the Oneness of God to the rest of humanity.¹ Iqbal further holds that the society can progress only by the controlling the forces of the world order.

In the next part of 'Ramūz-e-Bekhudī', Iqbal tells us that the perfection of the life of the society lies in this that just like the individual, the society should also becomes conscious of the 'self' in itself. And this is possible, according to him, only through the preservation of the traditions of the society.²

Thus we have seen that after propounding the theory of preservation of the 'self' is his 'Asrār-e-Khudī', Iqbal has dealt with the need of mingling the individual selves into the collectivity of the society in his "Ramūz-e-Bekhudī". He presents to us a balanced Ideal of human life in which the development of both the individual and society finds its proper place. His is not the Ideal which is to be pursued after running away from the society. So we can see well that

1. Ibid., pp. 54-56.

2. Ibid., pp. 59.

there is no scope for asceticism in Iqbal's philosophy also.

This brings us to the end of this chapter. We had occasions~~z~~ to see that the views of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal display many points of similarity. Both reject the doctrine of self-negation and asceticism found in their respective religious thought. Both stand for the doctrine of self-affirmation and self-realization. Both believe in the infinite possibilities of man's development. Both lay stress on a balanced relationship of the individual and the society. In short, there are many similarities in their views on the problem of the Ideal of human life as well.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Now it is time to give certain concluding remarks surveying the field we have covered. This study was undertaken with the assumption that there are certain similarities in the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Fortunately, our presumptions have been found well-founded. There is now reason to believe that the different philosophies and religions arising out of the diversity of space and time and out of different individuals are actually not so different, leave alone their mutual opposition, as they may appear *prima facie*. Concurrence of a thought is a queer phenomenon of nature. It is interesting to know how different persons react similarly when placed in a similar environment and faced by similar stimuli. That gives us reason to maintain that except in certain details and leaving aside the interpolations, there is much common in different philosophies and religions.

The philosophical spirit which is wedded to the pursuit of truth without recognising any limit, can ill-afford to neglect the understanding of the different philosophies and religions. Its vision can be enlarged and made more and more comprehensive if it does not cherish isolationism and keeps its eyes always open to the philosophies

other than itself. This will help ⁱⁿ /evolving a world-wide philosophical synthesis which could be termed as belonging neither to the East nor to the West but to the Truth — the highest ideal of philosophy.

It was with these convictions that we had undertaken the present study of the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. We have seen that both of our authors had to live in the same environment; the then India was undergoing British subjugation. Both were pained to see the passivity and inaction of their people. Both considered asceticism as being a morbid type of spirituality. Both conditioned the spiritual regeneration of their people with the political freedom from foreign rule. Both upheld the need of re-interpretation and reconstruction of their respective philosophical and religious traditions. Both sought the solace of the humanity in the harmonising and synthesising of the Religion and Philosophy, the East and the West, Intuition and Intellect and of active Life and Spirituality. Both believed in the infinite possibilities of man's development. Both maintained that the divine life or the kingdom of heaven is possible here upon earth where all the discords and contradictions will be resolved and man free from all limitations, incapacities and death will attain to freedom, light, justice, bliss and immortality.

We have also seen that there is much common in the philosophies of Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal. Both believe that the ultimate ground of all things is spiritual, not material. Both believe that Pantheism — is only a half truth, the Ultimate Reality being both immanent and transcendent. Both believe that the evolving consciousness is unfolding itself in all the forms — higher as well as the lower. Both believe that the Time and Space are only the modes for us to understand the unfolding movement of the Ultimate Reality. Both believe in the gradual and steady manifestation of the Divine, i.e. in Evolution. Both regard evolution as spiritual as opposed to mechanical evolution. Both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal maintain that the evolutionary process cannot come to a stand still at the emergence of man alone; **man** is only a transitional being; the next evolutionary step would be superman. Both consider that the divine life or the kingdom of heaven upon earth would be made possible by the race of superman.

The **I**deal of human life, which has been conceived both by Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal, is not self-negation but self-fulfilment and self-realisation. At no stage of man's spiritual evolution, his true individuality is abolished completely. Both believe that the philosophy of self-extinction and the resultant asceticism is the product of the times of decadence. The concept of the spiritual

development of the individual is, to both, fully consistent with the active and vigorous life in the world. With regard to the relation of the individual and the society, both our authors avoid the two extreme views of absolute individualism and the ruthless over-organised society, their view is of mutual interdependence of the individual and the society; both the individual and the society are vital to each other; none is to thrive over the other. And lastly both Sri Aurobindo and Iqbal are full of optimism for the future of the mankind. We cannot bear the temptation of quoting the following lines from our authors as an example of their hopes for a bright future of humanity. These lines are also somewhat similar in their contents. Thus Sri Aurobindo says in his great epic "Savitri":-

"One day I shall behold my great sweet world
 Put off the dire disguise of the gods,
 Unveil from terror and disrobe from sin.
 Appeased we shall draw near our Mother's face,
 We shall cast our candid souls upon her lap;
 Then shall we clasp the ecstasy we chase,
 Then shall we shudder with the long-sought god,
 Then shall we find Heaven's unexpected strain."¹

1. Sri Aurobindo : Savitri, 10 : 2, p. 689.

Similar ideas have been expressed by Iqbal in a poem of "Bāng-e-Darā". We are giving below the English translation of the verses:-

"The time of unveiling has come
 The beloved will reveal himself to everyone.
 The secret which has so long been veiled in silence
 Shall now be revealed.
 Gone is the age of cup-bearers drinking in seclusion
 The whole world shall become a tavern,
 And all shall drink.
 The ecstasies who have wandered so long
 Shall return to dwell in the cities;
 Bare-footed as ever they shall be,
 But they will partake of a new ecstasy."¹

In view of the foregoing discussions, we are inclined to think that the findings of our study have justified our efforts. It has at least served to point out to a vast field of research which, we hope, future explorers would take up for investigation.

1. Translation by Iqbal Singh : 'The Ardent Pilgrim', (Calcutta, 1951) p. 74.

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